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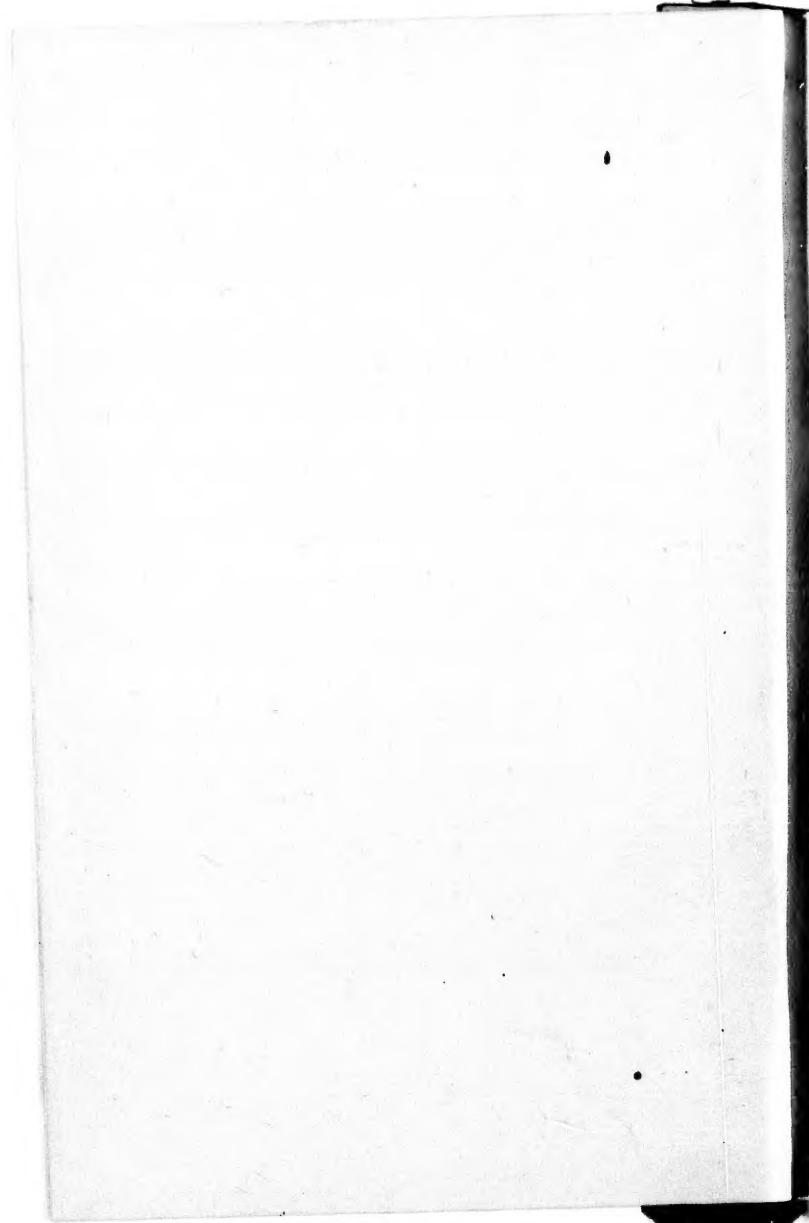
R. S. MACARTHUR

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THE OLD BOOK AND THE OLD FAITH

REVIEWED IN A
SERIES OF LECTURES

BY

ROBERT STUART MACARTHUR

PASTOR CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, NEW YORK

*"O holy, holy Book of God!
There are no words like thine;
The tones that angels bow to hear
Breathe through these lines divine;
And come, with love's own melody,
From the King's heart to mine."*

NEW YORK

E. B. TREAT AND COMPANY

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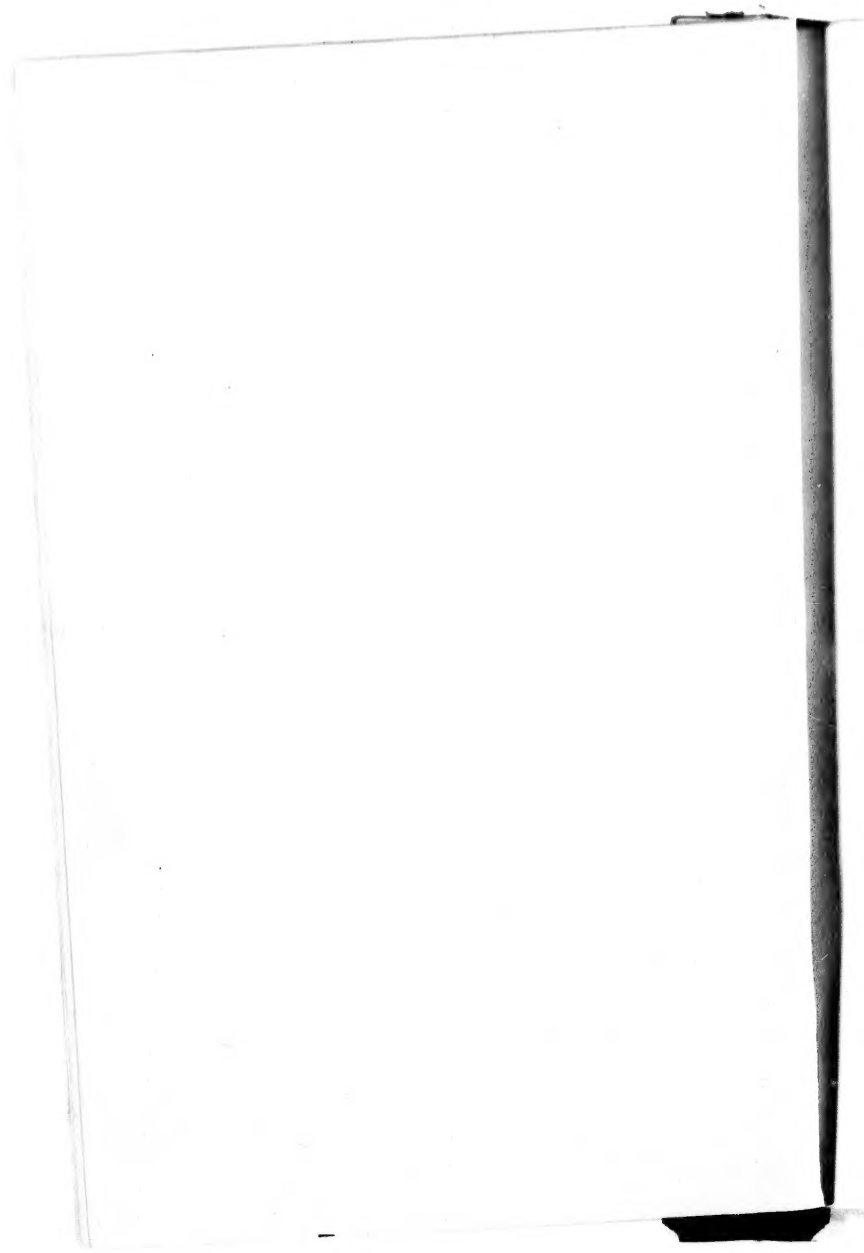
THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE AND
MUCH MORE.

BY ROBERT STUART MACARTHUR.

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PREFACE.

THE substance of this volume was delivered by the author on consecutive Sunday evenings to his own congregation. The recent destructive criticism of the Bible suggested the timeliness of a series of constructive, affirmative, interpretative, and so alleviative lectures on the old Book. The aim was to make these lectures popular in form, fervent in utterance, and evangelistic in spirit. It was no part of the purpose to deal in mere denunciation of error, but rather to give a plain enunciation of truth. The true Church wants truth, from whatever quarter it comes and by whatsoever messenger it is brought; it cares neither for the new theology nor the old, as such, but it wants above all else the true theology, whether old or new. These lectures do not antagonize ascertained truth; but they aim to put men on their guard, lest they take the *ipse dixit* of some interpreter as the certain conclusion of the highest scholarship. The critics

of one generation entirely contradict and sometimes utterly annihilate, the critics of a preceding generation; and they themselves, in turn, receive like treatment from the critics of a succeeding generation. The field of exegetical inquiry is covered with the *disjecta membra* of the critics of earlier days. Believers in established doctrines may well possess their souls in patience until the critics have completed their present, and apparently pleasurable, work of mutual destruction.

So long as their theories of interpretation are mere theories, they are unworthy of our serious opposition; should they become established truths, we would be unworthy of ourselves as lovers of truth did we refuse them our assent. There are "fads" in Scripture interpretation as in political discussions, in social customs, and in literary tastes. It is quite certain that the pendulum of religious opinion is now swinging toward a simpler faith, a warmer zeal, and a constructive interpretation. Many in all our churches are impatient with the microscopic criticism often applied to the Bible as seen in the wearisome displays of divisional vagaries indicated by letters of the alphabet, or by colors in a "Polychrome Bible." If the plays of Shakespeare, the poems of Milton, the

histories by Macaulay, or the orations of Daniel Webster were subjected to similar treatment, it could be proved, according to some of the methods of the so-called Higher Criticism, that many authors had written these productions; indeed, the authors and their works would be made inexpressibly ridiculous. The people are longing for pulpit teaching that is definite, affirmative, and authoritative.

It is certain that a return toward the older view of Bible interpretation is perceptible also among great scholars. Professor Sayce has recently affirmed that the spade is to demolish many of the conclusions of philology; that the tablets tend to establish the traditional view of the historical trustworthiness of the Old Testament; that the Pentateuch was written chiefly by Moses; that he has come to disbelieve in the later views of the Pentateuch; and that he mistrusts the conclusions of the Higher Critics. Professor Harnack has also uttered his protest against many of the conclusions of modern Biblical criticism and in favor of the older view. Professor Klostermann, on purely critical grounds, sharply opposes the reconstruction scheme of the Pentateuch made by Wellhausen and his school. He regards both the methods

and the manners of Wellhausen as utterly wrong. Verily this destruction of critics by critics is an interesting conflict.

The old Book will stand; "the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever."

R. S. MACARTHUR.

CALVARY STUDY, NEW YORK,
September 1, 1899.

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THE DIVINE REVELATION OF THE
BIBLE.



THE OLD BOOK.

I.

THE DIVINE REVELATION OF THE BIBLE.

It is confidently affirmed in many quarters that the Church is losing its hold upon large classes in the community, that the Bible has ceased to command the reverence and even the respect of the people, and that religion itself is no longer the potent factor which once it was in human thought and life. It is doubtless true, in the case of many who make these assertions, that the wish is father to the thought; and it is also true that similar assertions often have been made which were proved untrue by subsequent events. It must be admitted, however, that the Sabbath is no longer regarded with the sanctity which characterized it in former generations. The early part of the day is wellnigh smothered by the blanket-sheet newspaper; later portions of the day are rolled in the dust by the bicycle; and many professedly Christian people join with the acknowledged people of the world in spending what remains of the day in

social festivities. The Continental Sunday has made grievous inroads on the American Sabbath; the holy day has largely become simply a holiday.

It is not difficult to account for the indifference and irreverence which characterize Sunday and its services in recent times. For this deplorable result the unwise, and often really unscholarly, destructive criticism of the Bible is largely responsible. In former times the enemies of divine revelation were called infidels; now they are called churchmen of various creeds. Formerly they stood outside the temple of truth which they wished to destroy; now they stand in its holy places, wearing its honors and titles, while they are vigorously but vainly striving to undermine its eternal foundations. The time has come for preachers and all evangelical believers to speak clearly, strongly, loyally, and lovingly in affirmation of the old faith and in defence of the old Bible. It is believed that in all our churches there are many men and women who are utterly weary of the indefiniteness of much of the pulpit teaching of the last few years. It will not be intelligently denied that the pulpit often has spoken hesitantly, vaguely, and apologetically; certainly the time has come for it to speak confidently, affirmatively, and authoritatively.

Revelation is the act or process of revealing or disclosing what before was unknown. The word itself is profoundly suggestive. It comes from the Latin *revelo*, which is made up of *re*, back,

and *velum*, a veil. In revelation God draws back the veil which concealed Him from men. Our deepest needs cry out for light from God. Except help come from God other than that which we derive from the light of nature, we shall sink into moral inanity, if not into despair. We joyously recognize the fact that nature is a revelation, so far as it goes. This truth is beautifully illustrated in the nineteenth psalm. The first six verses of that psalm give us a statement of natural religion; beginning at the seventh verse and going to the end of the thirteenth verse, we have an illustration of the character and effect of revealed religion; and in the last verse of the psalm we have a manifestation of experimental religion. We thus have creation, revelation, and regeneration in the psalm. There is no contradiction whatever between these three forms of communicating the mind of God. Nature is an unwritten Bible, as the Scriptures are a written Bible. Young, in his "Night Thoughts," has well said of nature—

" 'Tis elder Scripture, writ by God's own hand,—
Scripture authentic; uncorrupt by man."

And Sir Thomas Browne, as quoted by Dr. George Dana Boardman in his pamphlet, "The Two Bibles," has expressed quaintly and forcibly a similar thought when he says: "There are two books from which I collect my divinity: besides that written one of God, another of His servant nature — that universal and public manuscript

that lies expanded unto the eyes of all." We err when we unduly depreciate the light of nature. We have sometimes supposed that we honored the God of the Word by imperfectly appreciating the God of the world. It is possible for us in this way to imagine that we are specially religious toward God's written Bible, when we are simply irreverent toward God's unwritten Bible.

But there are great questions which the light of nature can never answer; and these questions are to us of the utmost importance. If they be not answered, our moral nature will become dwarfed, shrivelled, truncated; and even our intellectual powers will be restrained and warped. How can man be just with God? Is there forgiveness for sin? Is there power anywhere to enable us to triumph over evil? Is there a God in the universe? If so, is He compassionate, forgiving, loving, or the reverse? Natural religion cannot fully answer these profound questions. Even in the case of the questions which it does answer, we require fuller confirmation than nature herself can give. Natural religion often gives hopelessly confusing and conflicting testimony; and just where we need its voice to be most authoritative there it is most defective. Greece, in all the glory of her art and song, was helpless to overcome the moral evil at her heart which was destroying her life. Rome, in her varied majesty and martial splendor, was unable to stem the awful tide of corruption which

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swept over all classes alike. The highest knowl-
edge possible apart from a divine revelation is
painfully imperfect, if it be not grossly corrupt.
Every heathen altar in ancient days and in modern
times tells of man's need of a divine revelation.
There is nothing at once more pathetic and inspir-
ing than the Apostle Paul's reference, in his ser-
mon on Mars' Hill, to the altar dedicated "to the
unknown god." The Greeks had lords many, but
they did not satisfy the aspirations of the cultured
minds and the longings of the aching hearts of
that remarkable people. In Japan to-day may be
seen an idolatry as gross, superstitious, and repul-
sive as that among the nations which reputedly are
far below the Japanese in intelligence and even in
morality. Every heathen form of worship is a
testimony at once to man's need of divine help, to
his extreme moral depravity, and to the possibility
of his rendering worship to the true God. There
is evermore in the heart of man a longing after
God, perverted though it invariably becomes.
Even among degraded peoples there are remnants
of the nobility of their nature and examples of
their varied aspirations after God. God's image,
though defaced, is not effaced. Thus the most
advanced heathen nations, in their idolatrous
practices, confess their ignorance regarding the
profoundest questions of time and eternity, and
their need of a divine revelation.

REVELATION IS TO BE EXPECTED.

May we expect help, light, and life from God? Has God given us this deep longing after Himself, and will He fail to reveal Himself? Will He mock us by continued disappointment? Are our nobler natures false to themselves and to Himself? Are not our aspirations God's inspirations? May we expect God to draw aside the veil and reveal Himself as a loving Father to His confessedly wandering and His rebellious, sorrowful, and helpless children? From what we know of God by nature, may we not expect that He will meet the deep needs of our intellectual and moral natures by their appropriate supply? We rejoice in the fact that God has made Himself partially known in nature. Of this truth, as we have already seen, the Psalmist of Israel sings in the nineteenth psalm. He recognized the fact that the heavens declare the glory of God; he virtually affirmed that "an undevout astronomer is mad." The heavens are far more eloquent to us to-day, with all our discoveries regarding astronomical bodies, than they could possibly have been to the Psalmist. Surely God who has spoken and who thus speaks in nature will speak in some higher form. By a marvellous system of ingenious contrivances He has arranged for the supply of our physical needs; and many of these arrangements long anticipate their actual use by us. If God has thus met the wants of our lower natures, surely

He will supply the deep necessities of our higher, sublimer, and diviner natures. The whole realm of nature abounds in illustrations which aid us in cherishing this hope. There are in the vegetable world wonderful remedial agents for the ills of life. There is in plant and flower a recuperative, restorative, curative element. The bruised plant seeks its normal condition; the broken bone puts forth remarkable energy to recover its former strength, and the lacerated flesh evokes forces and adopts processes which elicit our admiration, in the effort to recover from its wounded experience. By analogy we reason from the needs and helps of the body to the higher needs of our souls, and to the source of their providential supply. There is reason thus to hope for a restorative element, a reparative process, a spiritual medicament somewhere in the pharmacy of nature, somewhere in the laboratory of God. The thought of forbearance, of mercy, of pardon on the part of God, is anticipated in the creeds even of enlightened heathen philosophers. Hope strives to inspire life even in the saddest hearts. Without such hope it is doubtful whether heathen faiths could escape from utter collapse. Reason and hope thus suggest deliverance to come from God. Hope thus struggles against doubt, love against fear, and light against darkness. Blessed be God that in due time He came with the voice of mercy, singing the song of redemption, and filling earthly life with heavenly hope and joy!

THE NATURE OF REVELATION.

God has revealed Himself. The Eternal has spoken. Divinity has been clothed in humanity. The living God has made Himself known to living men. Miracles have attended the utterance of His voice. They ushered in the epoch of revelation as represented by Moses, by the prophets, and by Christ. They have well been called the great bell of the universe which calls attention to God's sermon, and they have been described also as "candles lit before the dawn, but put out after the sun has risen." It pleased God to introduce the miraculous element in giving the inspired revelation to men, but it pleased Him also to hold that miraculous element always at the minimum. It is the glory of life that God has appeared among men in the person of Jesus Christ. This manifestation of God was earth's highest honor; it was also heaven's brightest glory. We know not whether other planets have inhabitants; but we cannot conceive of any higher honor being conferred on any part of God's earth than that God's Son should become man and dwell among men and die for men. We may say with reverence that God could not help making a revelation of Himself. All life is revelatory. The tone of the voice, the glance of the eye, the movement of the hand or foot—these are all revelatory of culture and character. God cannot conceal Himself and remain God. Part of

the joy of His life is in the bestowment of life and blessing upon others. All true life is multiplied by impartation; and it is dwarfed by withholdment. Should God cease to give—it is said with reverence—He would cease to be God. The Dead Sea is the dead sea because it has no outlet, visible or invisible. In the nature of the case it can have no outlet, as it is the lowest body of water on the globe. It is estimated that daily six million tons of water fall into the Dead Sea; and all of this prodigious quantity of water is carried off by evaporation. Human life, and perhaps we may also reverently add divine life, would become stagnant and moribund did it cease to bestow itself upon others. A man who in order to conceal his character hides himself in a hermit's cell, by that act reveals his character more than he could by an active life among his fellow-men.

God, we thus see, has spoken to the children of men. Can we put implicit faith in the holy Scriptures as a divine revelation? This is the crucial question of the theological thinking of the hour. If there is no certainty here, there is dubiety everywhere. The Bible at this point is now fiercely attacked. A small amount of talent employed in destructive criticism will attract for a brief period a greater amount of attention than a vastly greater degree of talent employed in expounding Scripture, and in comforting God's people with its blessed truths. We may, however, be

sure that God will overrule all attacks made upon His Word, for its fuller confirmation. The whole foundation of revealed truth will thus eventually appear in all its granitic solidity. The present generation of destructive critics of holy Scripture will soon disappear in the exegetical and theological limbo in which their predecessors are now hidden and forgotten.

THE BIBLE GOD'S REVELATION.

The Bible is God's highest and fullest revelation to the children of men. The Bible means "the book." The word is *biblia*, the plural of the Greek word *biblion*, diminutive from *biblos*, meaning book. The English words book and beech were originally one and the same; the Anglo-Saxon is *boc*, a book, and also a beech-tree. Beechen tablets, or pieces of beech-bark, probably formed the original books of the ancient Saxon nations. The Latin *liber* meant bark, and also book. The Greek *biblos* was the inner bark of the papyrus, and so meant paper or book. Once the term might have been applied to a dictionary or to any other book, and in Chaucer it is so applied:

"To tellen all wold passen any *bible*,
That owher [anywhere] is."

It is a wonderful testimony to the acknowledged value of the Bible as the Word of God that it now has appropriated to itself this title, and that by

common consent men withhold the title from all other books.

The Bible is not simply a volume, but a library. Every age produces a fresh supply of books. Three thousand years ago Solomon said: "Of making many books there is no end." Were he to write that sentence to-day, he would give it in capital letters. Some books are evil, and that continually; others are like "the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Milton wrote a great truth when he said: "Books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a progeny of life in them, to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extracts of that living intellect that bred them. A good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose, to a life beyond life." The Bible is unique among the books of the world. It is of greater antiquity than any other volume. It is also more widely circulated than any other book. A century ago it was translated into twenty or thirty languages; but to-day it is read in not fewer than three hundred languages or dialects, and last year quite five million copies were printed by various Bible societies and publishing houses in different parts of the world. It is still the world's most popular book. It has

aroused the intensest hate and evoked the warmest love. It comes to us with the loftiest pretensions, claiming for itself absolutely divine authority. It contains histories, prophecies, lyrical and other poems, dramatic elements, profound philosophies, sententious proverbs, and the most seraphic forms of speech known in the prose or poetry of any literature of any age or country. It consists of two great divisions, the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the former division are thirty-nine books, and in the latter division twenty-seven books, thus making sixty-six books in all. A period of sixteen hundred to seventeen hundred years was occupied in its production. Marvellous advancement in the world marks the period while it was in progress; and an equally remarkable progress marks the book itself from the first majestic words of Genesis to the last love-notes of Revelation.

Let us love this book in every fibre of our nature and with every drop of our blood. Let us teach it to our children, to the students of our colleges, and especially to our Sunday-schools and congregations. Sir Walter Scott lay dying in his dining-room at Abbotsford, looking out on the Tweed which he so much loved. He asked his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, to read for him. "From what book shall I read?" asked Mr. Lockhart. "There is but one book," said Sir Walter. Mr. Lockhart read to him the fourteenth chapter

of John's Gospel, that chapter which breathes out the very air of heaven. Sir Walter listened with deep interest and marked devotion. When the reading ended he said: "Well, this is a great comfort. I have followed you distinctly, and I feel as if I were to be myself again." This was the testimony of him who had contributed so many volumes to an imperishable literature, regarding the value of the Word of God. This holy book will withstand all the assaults of all its foes. It will go on conquering and to conquer, until the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Well may we say, in the glowing words of the inspired Isaiah, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever."





THE ASSURED GENUINENESS OF THE
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II.

THE ASSURED GENUINENESS OF THE BIBLE.

WE do not receive the books of the New Testament simply on the authority of fathers or councils, but on the evidence which led them to accept these writings as credible and inspired. It is possible to show the genuineness of these books as truly as it is to show the genuineness of the poems of Homer, the orations of Demosthenes, the Commentaries of Cæsar, or any of the writings of ancient or modern times. We ask no favors for the Word of God. We submit it to all appropriate tests to determine its genuineness and authenticity. If it cannot stand these tests, it will perish; if it cannot stand these tests, it ought to perish. No book has been subjected to tests so severe; and no book has so successfully responded to the severest tests. It has been thrust into a furnace heated seven times hotter than it was ever heated for any other book, and it has come forth without even the smell of fire upon its pages.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCES.

What are some of the historical evidences in favor of the genuineness of the Word of God?

We give especially those that have reference to the New Testament, because the New Testament writers quote frequently from the books of the Old Testament, and in various other ways give it their indorsement. Regarding the Old Testament the testimony of Jewish authors, ancient and modern, affirms the sacredness of the books which now comprise our Old Testament Scriptures. The oldest complete version in any language—the Alexandrian, known as the Septuagint, 280–150 B.C.—and the Samaritan Pentateuch, give similar testimony. More and more is the scholarship of the world coming to believe in the person of Homer. Difficult as it may be to account for one Homer, it would be vastly more difficult to account for many Homers. The criticism which now is attempting to destroy the personality of Moses has vainly attempted to destroy the personality of Homer. It has also tried its wits upon the reality and personality of Shakespeare. It will as certainly expend itself in vain upon Moses and the Pentateuch as it has upon Homer and the Iliad, and Shakespeare and his dramas.

All the books of the New Testament, with the exception of 2 Peter, were used in more or less connected form in the latter half of the second century. This collection implies that these writings long had an existence as separate books. Their origin must have antedated by a considerable period the time when they appeared as a

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recognized collection of sacred writings. Tertul-
 lian, who was born at Carthage about 150 or 160,
 and who died there between 220 and 240, the first
 great writer of Latin Christianity, and one of the
 noblest characters of the ancient Church, speaks of
 the New Testament as made up of the "Gospels"
 and the "Apostles." He affirms the genuineness of
 the four Gospels, the Acts, 1 Peter, 1 John, thirteen
 epistles of Paul, and the book of Revelation, thus
 indorsing twenty-one books of the twenty-seven
 comprising our New Testament Scriptures. The
 Muratorian Canon in the West, and the Peshito,
 the *correct* or *simple* Version of the East, as Dr.
 A. H. Strong has pointed out, having a common
 date of about 160 to 170, taken together witness
 to the fact that at that time every book of our
 present New Testament with the exception of 2
 Peter was received as genuine. The Muratorian
 fragment describes the Gospels of Luke and John
 as the third and fourth. The Christian and apos-
 tolic Fathers in the first half of the second cen-
 tury testify that these books were written by the
 apostles themselves. It is thus certain that
 the origin must go back to the first century, if
 not to the time when the apostles themselves were
 living.

In proof of this statement, Irenæus, who was
 probably born in Asia Minor about 115, and who
 died in Lyons about 190 to 202, and certainly one
 of the most distinguished authors and theologians.

of the early Church, quotes the four gospels by name. He quotes about four hundred passages from the four gospels, and says: "Such is the certainty in respect to the gospels that even the heretics bear testimony to them." It is also certain that the order of the gospels was the same then as now. It is thus evident that the four gospels were written during the last sixty years of the first century of the Christian era. Irenæus was, as is well known, the disciple and friend of Polycarp, the exact dates of whose birth and death are in doubt, but who was a personal acquaintance of the Apostle John. Thus the testimony of Irenæus is virtually the evidence of Polycarp, whose testimony, in turn, was virtually that of the Apostle John. Justin Martyr, the first Christian apologist whose works have come down to us, who suffered martyrdom under Marcus Aurelius, probably in 165, who is mentioned for the first time by Tatian as the "most wonderful Justin," and who is quoted by Tertullian as the "philosopher and martyr," speaks of "memoirs of Jesus Christ"; he also used the term "gospels," and his quotations are evidently citations from our accepted gospels. Papias, perhaps born 70 or 75 and who died about 163, whom Irenæus calls a "hearer of John," declares that Matthew wrote in the Hebrew dialect the "sacred oracles,"—*ta logia*,—and that Mark, the interpreter of Peter, wrote under Peter's direction an account of the same events and discourses.

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The apostolic Fathers, as they are called—Clement of Rome, supposed to be the fellow-laborer of Paul, and mentioned in Phil. iv. 3, who died 101; Ignatius of Antioch, martyred 115, and Polycarp, 80-165—companions and friends of the apostles, have left us in their writings over one hundred quotations from or allusions to the New Testament writings; and among these every book except four minor epistles—2 Peter, Jude, 2 and 3 Epistles of John—is represented. It is well known that the early churches took the greatest care to assure themselves of the genuineness of these writings, and that they accepted them as genuine only on the most conclusive evidence to that effect. It would be easy to give with greater fulness of detail these evidences. Those who wish to study the subject at length can do so by examining Dr. A. H. Strong's chapter on "Positive Proofs that the Scriptures Are a Divine Revelation," in his variously learned and altogether admirable volume on "Systematic Theology."

Regarding the evidence concerning the Fourth Gospel and the Epistle to the Hebrews, satisfactory statements are not wanting. Tatian, the Assyrian, and the disciple of Justin, repeatedly quotes from the four gospels. He also composed a harmony of our four gospels, which he named the "Diatessaron," meaning the Gospel according to the four. While the differences in style between the gospel by the evangelist John and the Apoca-

lypse are recognized, those differences are explicable on the ground of John's greater familiarity with Greek when the gospel was written, he having formerly had a better knowledge of Aramæan. The points of similarity between the two books are very marked. This fact is observed in the common use of the titles for Christ, "the Lamb of God," "the Word of God," and "the True," as frequent epithets applied to our Lord in both books. The Epistle to the Hebrews was accepted during the first century after it was written. To this fact Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, and the Peshito Version bear witness. In the Roman, North African, and some other churches, the genuineness of this book was doubted for two centuries. It was believed that some of its characteristics were inconsistent with the traditions of a Pauline authorship. But this conclusion was at most merely a matter of opinion, and certainly an opinion not based on very firm foundations. At the end of the fourth century Jerome, after a careful review of all the evidence accessible in the case, decided in favor of the earlier opinion; Augustine followed Jerome in this opinion; so did also the Third Council of Carthage, in the year 397. The book has ever since held its place in the list of the received books of the New Testament. Many students of the late Dr. A. C. Kendrick will remember his interesting and learned discussion as to the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

He with some others was disposed to believe that it was written by Apollos, who was an Alexandrian Jew, "a learned man," and "mighty in the Scriptures." But even granting that Apollos was its chief author, he may have written at the suggestion and under the direction of the Apostle Paul; so that the spirit of the epistle is virtually Pauline, even though Apollos may have chiefly assisted in producing this great work, or even have been its exclusive writer.

Thus we have these ancient, unprejudiced, competent, and learned authors in favor of the genuineness of the New Testament Scriptures. It is well-nigh impossible to account for the unanimity of this competent testimony on any other hypothesis than that of the genuineness of the Scriptures to which the testimony is borne.

RATIONALISTIC THEORIES.

One characteristic of all these theories is the effort entirely to eliminate from the New Testament all its miraculous elements. Strauss gave us the "myth theory," making the gospels simply "crystallizations into story of the Messianic ideas, which had for several generations filled the minds of imaginative men in Palestine." Careful students clearly see, apart from all other considerations, that the time between the death of Christ and the issuance of the gospels was too short for the development of mythical histories, which nec-

essarily are the growth of centuries. It is also to be affirmed that the first century was not a credulous time. We know well that Sadduceeism had permeated all Jewish thinking and general reasoning. We know that even among the disciples there were doubters regarding even Christ's resurrection; there were doubters then that there might be no doubters now. The disciples were really slow to believe what surpassed their comprehension. In many ways the gospels run counter to the Jewish ideas of the time. The Gospel was for all nations; the Jews taught a religion which was for Jews alone. The Gospel proclaimed a suffering Messiah; Judaism gloried in the hope of a temporal monarch and a triumphant kingdom. We know, also, that the apostles were sober, thoughtful, judicial men, and the very last writers likely to be the propagators of mythical statements and groundless fancies. It is not too much to say that the man who could invent the character and history of Christ would have to be Christ Himself. It makes a less severe tax upon our credulity to believe that Christ lived and died and rose, as is taught in the gospels, than to suppose that the evangelists could have imagined such a life, death, and resurrection.

The theory of Baur has been called the "tendency theory." This theory makes the gospels originate in the second century. It affirms that they were written under other names, for the pur-

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pose of reconciling opposing opinions between Gentiles and Jews, both of whom were represented in the churches. Literary objections to this theory are numerous, and so are historical and doctrinal objections; but the moral objection is absolutely conclusive. This theory requires us to believe that faithful disciples of Christ in the second century were conscienceless fabricators of a life of the Lord, while claiming that they were companions of the pure and holy Christ whom they describe. Such Jesuitical impostors as these persons would be, on this supposition, is utterly inconsistent with every conception of honesty, manliness, honor, and Christianity. It has been wisely pointed out by Dr. Strong that Baur's admission that the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Corinthians were written by Paul in the first century utterly vitiates his elaborate theory. These epistles clearly testify to the main events of Christ's life, and thus the entire theory is overthrown by its own author.

We have also the "romance theory" of Renan. This theory contradicts that of Baur in essential particulars. It admits a basis of truth in the gospels, and it holds that they were written in the first century. Thus one rationalistic critic destroys his brother rationalist. Old-fashioned believers in the Gospel may preserve their souls in patience while these critics are lustily engaged in the work of mutual destruction. We can calmly

gaze upon the *disjecta membra* of the critics, rejoicing that the truth is not imperilled while they are destroying one another's rationalistic theories. Renan affirms that the events of Christ's life were so sublimated by the enthusiasm of His disciples that they are really overlaid with "pious fraud," and so cannot be accepted as genuine. He makes the gospels historic romances. He writes with much literary beauty, and he throws the charm of his rare sentimental glamour over his pages. But he dares deny to Christ "sincerity with Himself"; he affirms that Christ practised "innocent artifice"; he attributes to the gospels many characteristics which are as imaginative as the morality of the writers, according to his theory, was defective. He grants to Christ a marvellous sweetness of character, but denies Him credit for honesty, and he also robs Him of His divinity. His gushing language, at times, when speaking of Christ, must be most distasteful to every reverent soul so long as he denies Christ not only the glory of His divinity, but the perfection of human morality. He attributes a romantic enthusiasm to the apostles, but his views in this respect are conclusively contradicted by the superiority of the character and by the holy influence of the lives of these inspired writers. His theory is strangely weak, notwithstanding that it possesses a sentimental charm. It utterly fails to account for the rapid spread of the Gospel, and for the real character of Christ

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and His apostles. Renan's power is already decadent. Only as men link their names in loving loyalty and genuine reverence with the name that is above every name, can they themselves share in the glory of the immortality which belongs to the Son of God.

We have already seen that the writers of the New Testament indorsed the Old Testament. So did Christ. He loved this book. It was His only Bible. He never criticised it. This fact is sufficient to command our approval of that ancient Scripture. The writers of the New Testament imperilled their lives in support of the testimony they gave. The high moral tone of their writings is utterly opposed to any theory of dishonesty in their narratives. Their writings are also mutually confirmatory, there being just enough discrepancy to show the absence of all collusion. The moral ideas of these writers were greatly in advance of their time, and their writing is divinely adapted to the wants of the soul. It addresses all parts of our complex nature. It has been well remarked that in the Scriptures we have law and epistles for man's reason, psalms and gospels for his affectional nature, and prophecies and revelation for his lofty imagination. This element in sacred Scripture is one of the reasons for its remarkable charm, its universal appropriateness, and its continuous and irresistible power.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE.

The Bible itself is in many respects more wonderful than anything it contains. It has lived amid falling civilizations, opposing nationalities, and bitterest hostilities of every sort. It never was really a mightier power than it is at this hour. It is endowed with an immortal youth, a universal adaptability, and a resistless fascination. It carries on its own pages evidences of its own genuineness. Forgeries are usually clumsy productions. The work which professed to be the epistles of Phalaris, a tyrant of Agrigentum in Sicily, who lived about the middle of the sixth century B.C., and to be written to two of his contemporaries, was for a time generally accepted as genuine. But Richard Bentley, a distinguished classical scholar, applied to these epistles the modern methods of historical criticism, and they were soon conclusively proved to be base forgeries of at least eight centuries later. It was in 1690 that he published his "Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris." This work established his reputation throughout Europe; and in his employment of the principles of historical criticism which until then were practically unknown, he filled the learned world with astonishment and created a new era in scholarship. Cicero calls Phalaris the "most cruel of all tyrants"; but he nevertheless was fond of literature and philosophy, and was a patron of learned

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men. Imitations of books of the Bible have been attempted, but in every case the forgeries were easily detected. Were the books of the New Testament forgeries, they would long ago have betrayed themselves. They abound in allusions to current events, to popular customs, and to public characters, and if these references were inaccurate that fact would have been discovered speedily. Copying these ancient manuscripts was an honored and even sacred employment, and many copyists wrought out of love for the Word of God. Princes and nobles as well as high ecclesiastics and lowly believers earnestly engaged in this work. We know that the manuscripts of the first five centuries are parchments, made from the skin of sheep and goats. When we discover a manuscript on this material, we are able, approximately at least, to determine the date of the writing. We know also that manuscripts of a few centuries later were of paper prepared from the Egyptian papyrus, and then from the tenth century to the introduction of printing they were of paper manufactured from cotton. In the fifteenth century the printing-press began its work. Then a new era dawned for the dissemination of the Word of God; then manuscripts were eagerly sought, and then printing multiplied books with the utmost rapidity.

We know also, as we have already partially seen, that the early versions are another means of testing the genuineness of these books. The Septua-

gint was widely read in the synagogues of the Jews. It is referred to by different heathen authors. The Syriac Version, executed probably in the first century, the old Latin, Jerome's Version, called the Vulgate, executed from about 385 to 405, and other versions of later date—all these testify to the ancientness, genuineness, and authority of the sacred Scriptures. They show that in the first century of the Christian era, and in the case of the Old Testament two centuries earlier, there existed books which were widely known as the sacred Scriptures. There were opposing parties in the Church at almost all the eras of its history; and had any one of these a spurious copy of the sacred oracles, that fact would soon have been discovered, and would have been immediately denounced. But all parties referred to these Scriptures as their rule of faith and practice. A similar remark will apply to the relation between the Jews and the Samaritans regarding the portions of the Old Testament which they respectively held. We know also that the books of the Bible are referred to and quoted from by writers contemporaneous with and subsequent to the evangelists. Heathen writers before the time of Christ referred to the esteem with which the Jews regarded the Old Testament. Josephus and Philo frequently allude to it in their writings. In the New Testament, Christ and His apostles refer in one form or another to the Old Testament, it is said, about eight hundred and fifty

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times. Tacitus and Suetonius, in their histories, refer to the facts of Christianity as recorded in the gospels. Celsus, one of the earliest critics, writing in the second century, Porphyry, one of the most brilliant opposers of Christianity the Church has ever encountered, writing in the third century, and the Emperor Julian, surnamed the Apostate, in the fourth century, in violently opposing Christianity, speak of the gospels as written by the disciples of Christ.

Here, then, stands the Word of God. It bears the stamp of heavenly thought and inspired expression. No power on earth or in Hades can successfully oppose the inspired Word of the living God. The Bible will go on in its mission of mercy, telling the story of God's wondrous love to the sinful sons and daughters of men, after all its critics sleep in forgotten graves.

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THE UNIQUE INSPIRATION OF THE
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THE UNIQUE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

Is the Bible divinely inspired? What do we mean by the inspiration of the Bible? These are questions of the utmost importance, and they are also questions to which many answers have been given. The term *inspiration* comes from the Vulgate translation of 2 Timothy iii. 16: "*Omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata*"—"all Scripture divinely inspired." In this translation into Latin, the word *inspired* is the Greek word *Theopneustos*; this word nowhere occurs in classic or profane Greek. Its appearance in Plutarch, competent critics tell us, is in all probability an error of the copyist. It clearly seems to have been used for the first time in the passage just quoted. It often became necessary for the New Testament writers to coin new words, or to put new meaning into old words. The new thought born into the world with Christianity frequently required a new vehicle for its communication to men. It is somewhat difficult to decide upon the exact meaning of the term, inspired, "God-breathed," as here employed; sometimes the passive meaning was given to it, "endowed with God's Spirit"; at other times it was rendered

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"breathing the divine Spirit"; and at still other times, as in the Vulgate, "given by the Divine Spirit." Origen used the expression, "the holy volumes breathe the fulness of the Spirit." The Peshito and Ethiopic Versions understand it as meaning "inspired by God"; the Peshito translates it "every Scripture which is written in the Spirit."

DEFINITIONS OF INSPIRATION.

It is generally understood that no well-defined doctrine of the inspiration was formulated until after the Reformation. By the use of the term *inspiration* in this discussion is meant that divine control over the minds of the writers of the Bible which enabled them to write a book which is a sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice. The book, thus prepared, may be such an infallible rule, even though errors in dates, quotations, enumerations, and even in reasoning should be found upon its pages. It is admitted that there are different degrees and various kinds of inspiration. Sometimes the word is employed to include revelation; when so employed it implies that inspiration is the direct communication of truth by God to man—truth which human knowledge unaided by special wisdom from God could never acquire. At other times by inspiration is properly meant illumination; when so employed the term means the quickening of human faculties so that in a remarkable degree men may understand truths already revealed. The

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term may be employed in either of these senses; it may also be employed, as the connection would determine, so as to include both of these meanings. To the term a broader meaning is occasionally given; it is then used to convey the impression of such divine control as qualifies for correct oral utterance, or for heroic leadership in the kingdom of God. We are at present, however, chiefly concerned with that view of inspiration which is related to the authorship of the Holy Scriptures. In this sense it is such an influence over the writers of the Bible that all their writings, at least on distinctively religious subjects, are absolutely trustworthy. We saw in a former chapter that it was natural to suppose that God would make a revelation of Himself to the children of men. We are now prepared to affirm that if God were to make a revelation of Himself to men, it is fair to assume that He would keep the record of that revelation, especially in its distinctly religious teachings, absolutely free from error. In human courts great pains are taken to have accurate reports made by stenographers of the testimony of witnesses, the speeches of advocates, and the decisions of judges. In reports which are revelations of the divine mind and will we can well believe that God, as the great Revealer, would take the utmost pains to secure correct reports of His revelations. What we may fairly assume seems actually to have taken place in all the revelations which God has given to men.

Jesus assumes responsibility for the inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures. He quotes those Scriptures with the formula, "It is written," and also declares in regard to that Scripture that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away"; and He also calls that writing "the word of God," and affirms that it "cannot be broken." Attention has been called to the fact that Christ quotes from four of the five books of Moses, from the Psalter, from Isaiah, and from still other Old Testament books, with the formula, "It is written." Among the Jews this formula indicated that the quotation was from a sacred book, and a book whose sacredness depended largely upon a belief in its divine inspiration. Christ paid the utmost respect to the Old Testament Scriptures. He always spoke of those Scriptures as the Word of God; and to all Christians this fact is incontrovertible evidence of the divine origin of these Scriptures. Both Talmudic and Alexandrian Judaism agreed in ascribing to the Old Testament Scriptures a peculiar and unquestioned authority. It was constantly affirmed that the *thorah*, or law, was of immediate divine origin. Some teachers of Judaism affirmed that God wrote it with His own hand; others declared that He dictated it to Moses as His amanuensis. Some were willing to admit that Joshua was the author of the account of the death of Moses; but others went so far as to affirm that Moses himself wrote the account, and wrote it

with his tears. Nothing is more certain than that Jesus Christ, who spake as never man spake, who was the great Teacher and the sinless Saviour, regarded the Old Testament with as much respect as did the Jews of His day.

When Jesus commissioned the apostles and teachers, He promised them the aid of the Holy Spirit in teaching; and the apostles claimed to have received this promised Spirit and to have spoken with divine authority. They distinctly affirm that they spoke, "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth." The apostle Paul declares, "I received of the Lord that which also I delivereth unto you." Those who were not apostles, as Mark, Luke, James, and Jude, were recommended to the churches by apostolic sanction and authority, and seem to have written under immediate apostolic guidance.

THEORIES OF INSPIRATION.

Thus far we have spoken merely of the fact of inspiration. It is fitting, however, that we press our inquiry as to the mode or theory of inspiration. We might hold the fact with absolute tenacity, even though we could not formulate satisfactorily a theory regarding the method of inspiration. There are those who hold tenaciously to the doctrine of the atonement of Christ who find themselves unable to state a satisfactory theory of the atonement. But it is well to discover, as far as

we may learn it, the method as well as the fact of inspiration.

Some hold what is known as the intuition theory of inspiration. By this term they mean simply a greater insight into truth than is possessed by the majority of men. They make inspiration but a greater degree of intellectual and spiritual apprehension than that which is possessed by the rank and file of Christian believers. They deny the uniqueness of the inspiration of the writers of Holy Scripture. They would make them to be inspired as were the great philosophers and poets of classical days—or as were Shakespeare and Milton, or Tennyson, Browning, and others of modern times. Thus knowledge similar to that possessed by the writers of Scripture gave rise to sacred books in other religions, and to works on philosophy and art in other relations in life. This view of inspiration makes it but a higher development of the intellectual and spiritual potency of which every man is possessed in some degree.

Doubtless there is an element of truth in this view. All men have some insight into the truth, and the true theory of inspiration recognizes this general fact. But, unfortunately, in matters of religion man's insight is vitiated by sin; his judgment is thus perverted, his moral vision greatly dimmed, and sometimes it seems to be entirely wanting. Except he be supernaturally guided, he is sure to err, and thus to be a blind leader of the

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blind. It is also to be observed that this theory of inspiration is self-contradictory. If it were true, then one man is inspired to teach as true what another man is inspired to contradict as false. The Vedas, the Koran, and the Bible, it has been well remarked, cannot be inspired to contradict one another. The Vedas permit stealing; the Bible denounces theft. Are both these books inspired? If so, then there is no such thing as truth; if so, then truth is simply what men imagine. There is no objective reality, if this theory be correct; there are only our subjective notions regarding what is real and true. It is not too much to affirm that if this theory were true, there is no God who is truth and who reveals truth. It is certain that this theory leads directly to atheism. It explains inspiration by virtually denying that there is any unicity in inspiration.

Another theory is known as the illumination theory. This theory holds, with the preceding, that inspiration is simply an increase of the illumination possessed by every Christian. It does not regard the Bible as the Word of God, but simply as containing the word of God. There is, of course, an element of truth in this theory. Error pure and simple could not long endure. It is the fibre of truth in false doctrines which holds them together sufficiently long to attract notice and to receive a qualified approval. In judging this theory it ought to be borne in mind that, strictly

speaking, the illumination of the Holy Spirit gives no new truth, but simply a more vivid, accurate, and vital apprehension of truth already revealed.

We come to what is known as the dictation theory. This theory has been held by many excellent Christian people; perhaps, indeed, most of those who are known as orthodox Christians, at some time in their lives held this theory literally and tenaciously. It is sometimes characterized as the mechanical theory of inspiration. It holds that the Holy Spirit took such possession of the minds and bodies of the writers of Scripture that they became passive instruments, mere amanuenses, mere machines, under the power of the Spirit. This is sometimes called the verbal theory of inspiration. Those who oppose this theory will not deny that there are instances when God spoke with an audible voice, and when the command was that His words be written as spoken (Dan. iv. 31; Acts ix. 5; Rev. i. 10, 11; xix. 9; xxi. 5). But these examples are rare, they certainly were not God's invariable, or even usual, method of communicating His divine will. In favor of this theory is the view sometimes held that thought could not be suggested by the Spirit without the suggestion also of actual words. It is also supported on the ground that it gives the authority of Scripture, in actual words to the doctrines of revelation. Among the supporters of this rigid theory of verbal inspiration, frequently known as the mechani-

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cal theory, were nearly all of the Protestant theologians of the seventeenth century, and many, especially among the English and Scotch, in the eighteenth century; and in the nineteenth century such men as Carson, Haldane, Gaussen, and still others representing different countries.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DICTATION THEORY.

This theory is opposed because of the evident peculiarities of style observed in the inspired writings. There is manifestly a human element in the Bible. This element distinguishes one writer from another. The variations in the accounts of the same transaction show that verbal inspiration was not the divine method. If there were no human element, and all Scripture writers were mere machines, there would be no idiosyncrasies in thought and expression. We know that Milton dictated to his daughters, and we know also that his style in "Paradise Lost" is the same whether he dictates to one daughter or to another. We know, on the contrary, that there is a marked difference between the styles of various Scripture writers. No careful student can fail to discover a difference between Hosea and Isaiah, and between John and Paul, although the same Spirit suggested to each the heavenly thought he was to communicate. In reply to this objection, those who hold the mechanical view of inspiration declare that the Spirit accommodated Himself to the peculiarities

of the writers. But that view is almost an impossible supposition, and granting that it were possible, it will not explain the divergencies of statement by different Scripture writers concerning the same facts. We know that there are four forms in which the superscription on the cross is given. If we might expect verbal exactitude—*ipsissima verba*—anywhere, it would be in giving this superscription, but noticeably it is wanting. If we compare the words of our Lord to the disciples on the lake, we have a similar divergency in the forms of expression. It is to be further said that verbal inspiration is an expression not indorsed by the Scriptures themselves. Perhaps it is not too much to say that words as such are incapable of inspiration. Oral words consist of certain sounds, written words of certain marks; and these sounds and marks are merely material signs of which a spiritual element can scarcely be predicated. It used to be affirmed that we could not think without words, but a truer statement of mental processes now obtains. It is absolutely certain that children have thoughts long before they have words. It will not be denied that dogs and other animals have some kind of dream or thought, although they are deprived of powers of speech. It is unfortunate that this theory of inspiration has been so earnestly held by many noble souls and true believers in the fact of inspiration; because critics in opposing the theory believed that they opposed the fact itself. In de-

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stroying the outpost, they considered that they captured the citadel. We all certainly are possessed of thoughts for which at the moment we have no adequate word. We often think of a friend's face when we are unable to call his name; and God's Spirit gives us thoughts too deep for utterance in any human language, both when we are addressing God in prayer and our fellow-men in testimony and exhortation.

It is to be remembered that the theory of verbal inspiration is comparatively modern in origin. Strictly speaking, the early Fathers knew nothing of this theory. It is true that some of them, in employing the figure of a harp or lyre, have been considered by some modern critics as indorsing this theory. But that figure was not in general use, and it ought not to be too literally interpreted. Not until the seventeenth century did the idea of verbal inspiration become formulated into a theory. It had, indeed, been floating about loosely from mind to mind long previous to that time. Calovius, the bitter opponent of Grotius and Calixtus, fully set forth the verbal theory; later writers carried it so far as to apply it to the vowel-points and to the various signs of punctuation. Perhaps some of the Fathers, among whom were Justin Martyr and Athenagoras, held the mechanical and even the "mantic" theory. Both Irenæus and Augustine speak of the apostles as writing what they remembered; and yet at times they seem to imply

that the apostles were but the hands which wrote at Christ's dictation. Origen distinguished between the contents of Scripture and its language—in which latter mistakes might occur. He more than any other of the Fathers discussed the nature of inspiration. Thomas Aquinas distinguishes between revelation and inspiration. He properly affirmed a progressive knowledge as writers came in thought and life nearer to Christ. It was left for Abelard to assert that prophets and apostles were not always free from error. The Reformers always emphasized the authority of Holy Scripture. This authority was not seriously questioned; the true inquiry was as to the meaning of Scripture. Luther recognized the Holy Spirit as the author of the Scriptures, but he admitted that human writers showed their peculiarities as they poured their whole heart into their words. Calvin's position in this regard was substantially that of Luther. Calovius, as we have already seen, was the author of the theory which was long identified with Protestant orthodoxy. The phrase "plenary inspiration" is nowhere warranted by the Scriptures; "plenary authority" would be a better phrase. Strictly speaking, Christ alone was plenary inspired, of all human beings.

THE TRUE THEORY.

What is known as the dynamical theory is the theory which is supported in these lectures; it also

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has the support of the best theological thinkers of our time on both sides of the Atlantic. This theory holds that inspiration is not a natural but a superhuman fact, and that it is a special and unique work of God in the soul of man. It holds with great earnestness to the affirmation that the Scriptures are neither exclusively human nor entirely divine; and that the Scripture writers wrote not passively, but actively; not mechanically, but consciously; and not impersonally, but personally. Inspiration used all the personal peculiarities of the writers; it employed all their excellencies in conception and expression, all their abilities in reasoning toward conclusions, and in formulating those conclusions; and it also used even their defects in reasoning, and their inelegancies of literary style. The Bible thus presents God's truth in human forms. The apostles were earthen vessels in which was the grace of God; so the Scriptures are human vases in which is contained God's revelation. Paradoxical though the statement may seem, it is literally true that the humanity of the Bible is a conclusive proof of its divinity. The writers of the Bible were not typewriters, but typists; they were not God's pens, but God's penmen. The bush in which God appeared to Moses remained the bush, while yet it glowed with supernatural splendor. The apostles did not cease to be men when they became apostles. The Spirit of God took the faculties with which they were endowed,

and wrought through them for the declaration of truth and the revelation of God. These writers were thus so guided by the Holy Spirit as to secure absolute accuracy in all the ethical and doctrinal teachings of the Bible. Their thoughts were inspired, but their words were not dictated. They were so controlled as to make no error of doctrine, though in all that pertains to the mode of expression each writer was left to the spontaneous movement of his own mind. This theory is to-day accepted by the majority of orthodox English, Scottish, and American theological writers.

INFALLIBLE RECORD.

Thus inspiration secured an infallible transmission of God's thoughts through the minds, tongues, and hands of holy men of old. Inspiration was neither omniscience nor sanctification. Sometimes it communicated new truth; sometimes it simply guided men in collecting and arranging existing material. The union of the human and divine in the composition of the Bible is one of its striking glories; it is not too much to say that it is one of its divine excellencies. Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, was both human and divine. The Bible, as the revealed Word, is both human and divine. The union of humanity with divinity in Jesus Christ uniquely fitted Him to be the Saviour of men. The union of the human and the divine in the Bible perfectly adapts it to be the infallible rule

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of faith and practice of men made in the image of God. Any criticism of the Bible because of the human element which it contains is utterly illogical; as well might we criticise Jesus Christ because of the human element in His birth, life, character, and work. It is possible to prove the divinity of Christ because of the perfection of His humanity. No stream of human life ever flowed through this world and reached so high a point as the life of Christ; but no stream can rise higher than its source. If we deny the divinity of Christ we cannot explain His unique humanity. We are bound to account for Jesus Christ as we account for other great characters of history, ancient and modern. But we never shall be able to explain the height to which the stream has risen, except we acknowledge its source at the throne and in the bosom of God. It is easier to believe in the Scriptural account of Christ's divine origin as seen in His unique birth, than to attempt to account for Christ's life in its purity, power, and divinity, if we deny the unicity of His birth. In like manner, it is easier to believe that the Word of God was written by holy men of old as they were inspired by the Spirit of God, than it is to explain that Word if we deny that fact. The union of the human and the divine in Christ is an element of His perfection as the Saviour of men. So this twofold element in the Bible is a proof of its fitness as the revelation of God to man. If God

is to communicate truth to men, He must employ language which men can understand; He must talk to men as men, and not as angels or seraphs.

The Bible thus remains a unique book. Every Christian mind recognizes in it a fuller knowledge and a diviner authority than are found in any other book. The Divine Spirit makes Himself felt on every page; He shines forth in matchless glory in every chapter. In these sacred pages God's mind comes into conscious contact with our minds. We may well believe that the Scriptures were inspired, among other reasons, because of their inspiring effect upon the thought and speech of all their students. Here light breaks forth as from the very throne of God. We are conscious of the enlightening, ennobling, purifying, humanizing, divinizing influence of the mind of God revealed in the Word of God which we call the Bible.

In a later chapter reference will be made to views originated by English deists, German rationalists, and by positivists of many shades of thought. Objections which are made to inspiration will also be named and answered, and positive proofs of the inspiration of Scripture will be adduced. Let us hold fast to this holy book as the word not of men, but of God, as the word which is to be our guide in life, and by which at the last we are to be judged in the immediate presence of its divine Author.

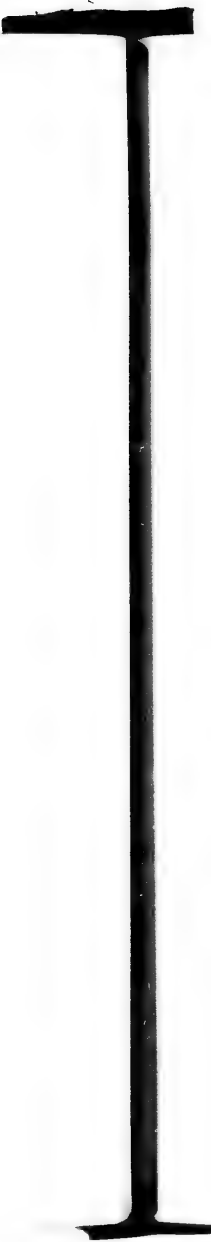
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THE DEFINITE DESIGN OF THE
BIBLE.



IV.

THE DEFINITE DESIGN OF THE BIBLE.

HAS the Bible a distinct and definite design? If so, can we clearly discover and definitely state that design?

To these questions partial answers were given in a former chapter; but the questions are sufficiently important to warrant a fuller reply. Every book worthy of the name has a definite design, a distinct purpose. There has been much discussion recently as to whether works of romance should be didactic in their purpose and definite in their design. Marion Crawford, who has herself contributed so many volumes with a real though not a declared purpose, has taken strong ground against the didactic novel. But whether the purpose be stated or not, every book worthy of the name must have a definite design. A purposeless book is necessarily a powerless book. "Romona" in its subtitle clearly states its purpose; and that purpose it fully accomplishes. "Marcella" is a discussion of various socialistic and economic theories; and the purpose is clearly seen at every stage in its presentation. "Robert Elsmere" is distinctly

definite in its purpose, although weak in argument and unscholarly in theological methods. Its influence is already decadent. Dante's "Divine Comedy" reveals its purpose to every careful student. Its aim is to show the awfulness of sin and the blessedness of divine forgiveness. Whether the purpose be sustained or not, every volume rightly conceived and properly executed has a distinct purpose. It is difficult to see why any book is written if it have not a distinct purpose; if it have no purpose it has no *raison d'être*.

The Bible in this respect, as in so many other regards, is no exception to this general rule of worthy literature. What is its purpose? Incorrect answers have often been given to that question, and as a result false literary judgments have been pronounced on the Bible. It is not a text-book on astronomy or geology, and it is not a treatise on science or art; still it has inspired the loftiest art in music, sculpture, and painting. It is not a treatise on nature; yet there is in the Bible more loving and sublime description of nature than is found in the whole range of the Greek and Latin classics. There is more lofty and august representation and personification of nature in the Psalter alone than in any volume of the greatest of either the Greek or Latin poets. The Bible is not an encyclopædia of universal history; and yet it gives more general information on matters of universal knowledge than any other book in the world. Not Herodotus, but Moses is

the father of history; not Lycurgus nor Solon, but Moses is the world's great lawgiver. The Bible gives us the most ancient history of the most primitive events. It is not intended to be a text-book on cosmogony—the science of the origin or creation of the universe; and yet it cannot be proved that any of its statements on this subject, when rightly understood, are contradicted by the most authoritative conclusions of modern science. Modern science has laughed to scorn the cosmogonies of some of the great nations of antiquity, but it nowhere opposes the teaching of the Bible. The Bible cannot contradict true scientific conclusions. God is one; truth is one. God cannot contradict Himself. What He affirms in geology must agree with what He declares in Genesis. Our interpretations of God's teachings in His two volumes of creation and revelation may differ, but God's revelations themselves always harmonize. Infidelity once styled Moses a blunderer and the Bible a fraud when the Bible affirms that there was light before the sun; but now all the scientists declare that this very result must have occurred from the conditions then present. Moses was no scientist; he lived in an age when nothing was known of molecular activity. He never heard of Newton's theories, or the nebular hypothesis of La Place. If he had, he could not have understood either of them. How came he to anticipate the conclusions of modern science? God taught him. God taught

Moses, and Moses teaches the scientists of to-day. Medical science in several important respects is slowly attaining, with reference to all sanitary matters, the high position reached by Moses ages ago. How came he to be so vastly superior to systems of medicine in his day? How came he to be in striking particulars in advance of medical science in our day? There again stands God. Let infidelity be dumb; let it hide its empty head. It is time that a shallow atheism learned becoming modesty. The Bible, even in its incidental allusions, shows a wisdom far superior to the teachings of science so-called at the time when the Bible was written. The most advanced scientists of that day were vastly inferior in scientific knowledge to the inspired writers of the Word of God.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE.

But the teachings of the Bible in all these matters are simply incidental. It is, however, beyond all other literature of its day, even in its *obiter dicta*. How unspeakably glorious it must be in its direct statements regarding the purpose for which it was written! How profound is its philosophy, how seraphic its poetry, how divine its revelation, how sublime its science of salvation! What is the exact purpose of the Bible? Again it is to be affirmed that it does not profess to be a cyclopædia of art, literature, or science. We ought not then to be disturbed by surface difficulties in

its references to matters of this class. Its purpose is vastly deeper, higher, broader, and diviner. Its aim is to meet man's religious necessities, to answer his profound spiritual questions, and to enable him to live rightly on earth, and finally to enjoy the presence of God forever in heaven. It is a volume of supernatural revelation concerning God, duty, and immortality. It comes to give us a celestial philosophy and a divine salvation. It professes to be, in the words of Milton's "Comus":

"That golden key
That opes the palace of eternity."

If it be divinely infallible in its own special department of knowledge and for its specific purpose, we ought not to demand more. We go to the Bible of Nature for truths regarding science; we go to the Bible of Scripture for truths regarding salvation. This is a distinction which ought everywhere to be made. The Bible is our great classic in the noblest of all knowledges.

In carrying out its exalted purpose it reveals to us the character of God. We have already seen that creation is a revelation of God; but we have also seen that creation can never answer the deepest questions of the soul. The Bible discusses all subjects of history as subordinate to its great end, to its unique design of making known God to men. Thus only so much of general history is written as will conduce to that design; thus we have a full

and continuous record of the Jewish nation, while Assyria and other nations appear upon the page and then disappear for hundreds of years. Both the Psalmist and the apostle Paul appeal to nature as making known God; "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." Finely has it been said that

"There's nothing bright, above, below,
From flowers that bloom to stars that glow,
But in its light the eye may see
Some traces of the Deity."

But the human heart longs for answers regarding which nature is dumb. That the heavens declare God's glory cannot for a moment be doubted. Even heathen philosophers recognized that nature taught God's existence. This is clearly seen in Plato's Dialogues:

"How would you prove the existence of the gods?" asks the Athenian Stranger in Plato's "Laws." The Cretan Clinias answers: "In the first place, the earth and the sun, and the stars and the universe, and the fair order of the seasons and the divisions of them into years and months, furnish proofs of their existence; and also there is the fact that all Hellenes and barbarians believe in them."

While crossing the Mediterranean from Africa

to Europe after his Egyptian expedition, Napoleon was standing on the ship's deck one night in silent thought, when he heard a number of his officers loudly denying the existence of God. Suddenly turning, he raised his hand, and pointing to the starry heavens, startled and silenced them all by asking: "Gentlemen, who made all that?" The rebuke was immediate and effective. It seems incredible that any man can stand amid the evidences of God's creative power on the earth, can gaze on the hosts of heaven, can listen to the music of old ocean, to the crash and roll of the thunder, to the matchless music of birds, and to the subtle but real "music of the spheres," and doubt the existence, power, and goodness of God. A French atheist said to a humble peasant: "We will pull down your spires and rid you of your superstitions." The peasant replied: "Aye, you can pull down our spires, but you cannot blot out God's stars." These stars, "forever singing as they shine," tell of God's existence, power, and providence in language which no form of atheistic philosophy can ever silence.

But we need vastly more than the voice of nature. Nature makes known God's hand; revelation manifests God's heart. Men without the Bible have often regarded God as an object of terror rather than of love. They have perverted God's purposes in creation, and have worshipped the creature rather than the Creator. Not desir-

ing to retain God in their knowledge, they have lost that knowledge, and have erected altars to unknown gods. The Bible makes God known as Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Father.

It also accomplishes its design by teaching men the need of God. The human heart is in a state of unrest until it finds repose in God. Only God can satisfy the immortal longings of an immortal being; only the living God can meet the wants of a living man. It is man's crowning glory that he can find full satisfaction only in his God. Heathen mythologies vaguely taught Bible truths. Thus we are informed that Prometheus, "Forethought," made man out of earth and water and stole fire from heaven to inspire him with knowledge, and that Pandora, "the All-endowed," made in heaven by the gods and given to man as the first woman on the earth, brought by her fall all forms of suffering and misery upon the earth. But on all these dimly reflected truths the Bible sheds a flood of light. It reveals man's pristine condition and blessedness, his sin and consequent misery, and it declares how he can be restored to the favor, friendship, and fellowship of God. Sin is the jarring note in the oratorio of humanity. How shall man be just with God? This is the deepest question in human life. To it, unaided wisdom has no satisfactory reply. In its presence every merely human philosophy is absolutely dumb. Every heathen shrine is man's uninstructed answer to

this question. The Bible comes with an answer clear as the sunlight, sweet as a strain of angelic music, and authoritative as the voice of God Himself.

In accomplishing its design, the Bible gives the true rule of life. Heathenism had no conclusive answer to give when questioned as to the rule of life. Epicurus could only say: "The chief good is pleasure; the cardinal grace prudence." The Stoics taught that the rule of life is indifference alike to pain and pleasure; the Peripatetics taught that virtue is to be pursued in prosperity, but at times a lie is preferable to the truth; theft, swearing, and any sin were occasionally allowable. In like manner philosophy has failed to supply a rule of life in modern times. Lord Herbert taught that men are not to be blamed for acting according to their passions. Bolingbroke, Volney, and Hume made self-love the rule of life. Modern heathenism has precepts enough, but it imparts no moral power to reduce these precepts to practice. At this point Buddhism and all the ethnic religions utterly fail. These statements are not the result of preconceived prejudices, but are in exact harmony with thoroughly ascertained facts in the experience of heathen nations. At this point the Bible soars above all these systems of philosophy, both ancient and modern. It is radiant with the glory of heaven as an ethical guide, and it tells the wandering soul how to find the source of spiritual power. It en-

ables true seekers after God to realize in their blessed experience the lofty ideals held forth in its divinely inspired pages. It reveals our exalted destiny, declaring that we are heirs of immortality, and may be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. The Bible thus points the way to godliness of life on earth and immortal glory in heaven. Just before his death the brave and heroic Socrates could only say: "I am in good hope that there is something remaining for those who are dead, and that it will be much better for good than for bad men. I am going out of the world, and you are to continue in it, but which of us has the better part is a secret to every one but God." Plato had only a hope but no assurance of immortality. Cicero ends his discussion in uncertainty. Seneca says: "Immortality, however desirable, is rather promised than proved." We know that annihilation is abominable to every man in his normal mental and moral condition. Who can answer for us these profound questions? Human speculation is silent; the most learned philosophy can give us only guesses and not truths. Thank God, the Bible speaks with the authority of truth. It has brought immortality to light; it shows that the kingdom of heaven is open to all believers; it makes earth the vestibule of heaven; it clears away all illusions of speculation, and floods earth with the supernal radiance of heaven. Blessed Bible, Book of God, guide of life, glory of earth, and revealer of heaven!

It is the

"Star of eternity! the only star
By which the bark of man could navigate
The sea of life and gain securely the coast of bliss."

But the Bible not only gives the true rule of life, but it supplies needed knowledge as to how to secure divine strength for the development of character. We never are able to realize our high ideals except as we have strength given us from God toward that end. The Word of God tells us of the source of spiritual power; it is the great instrument in spiritual regeneration. The apostle Peter distinctly says: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." Thus the Bible teaches what to be, and how to become what it sets before us as the standard of character. In this respect the volume is unique among the books of the world. It has been well said by William Walters, in his booklet entitled "Claims of the Bible": "Bible-loving men are Bible-living men, and are in the highest sense good men." All parts of the Bible tend to produce spirituality of character. It is a safe and the only safe guide to heaven known among men. The Psalmist asks, "Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way?" and he rightly answers, "By taking heed thereto according to Thy word." The Bible really is intelligible only to those who have honest minds and pure hearts. As the profound and devout Pascal

truly remarked: "The Bible is a science of the heart and not of the understanding; love is not only the end of the Bible, but the entrance to its meaning." The result is that the Psalmist could readily say that he knew more than the ancients and was wiser than his teachers. Voltaire was learned in many respects, but he was no match for the Christian serving-woman who

"Just knows and knows no more, her Bible true—
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew."

UNENVIABLE CRITICISM.

Men who try to destroy the faith of the people in the Word of God are engaged in a cruel work. They would rob life of much of its light, the heart of its chief joy, and the future of its divinest hope. But they are engaged in a work which they can never accomplish. Some of us are daring enough to believe that William Shakespeare will still live after Ignatius Donnelly is dead. This modern critic is not likely to be successful in proving that the world's greatest poet is simply a gigantic myth. It is well for critics of Moses that he has long been in heaven. When on earth in the court of Pharaoh, or at the head of the Egyptian army, he proved himself to be a foeman worthy of the steel of his bravest adversaries. Pharaoh tilted against him, and Pharaoh went to the bottom of the Red Sea. Jannes and Jambres opposed him, and they are pilloried forever on the page of sacred story.

A child or an idiot let loose with a knife or a hammer in a gallery of paintings or a hall of sculpture could destroy more in an hour than a Raphael or an Angelo could create in a lifetime. There is no sphere in life in which the minimum of talent can so attract the maximum of passing notice as when engaged in destructive criticism; and there is no sphere in life in which one's talent will so soon be utterly forgotten. The Bible will live as does its Divine Author. It will go on conquering and to conquer in all the ages to come. The grass of infidel eloquence withereth, the flower of agnostic philosophy fadeth, but the word of the living God shall stand forever.

The theories of many of the critics are confusing and self-contradictory. If a score of the most eminent critics were deprived of the writings of the atheistic critics of the earlier day and the German theorists of to-day, and were left to their own resources with their grammars and dictionaries to settle all questions connected with the genuineness, authenticity, and inspiration of the Scriptures, the results of their work would be absolutely hopeless contradictions. Most of them derive their knowledge at second hand from agnostic or neologistic critics. The conclusions of the higher critics are far more contradictory than is the Word of God, even according to the affirmations of the most destructive of these critics. We do not fear for the Bible. Spiritual experience demonstrates the

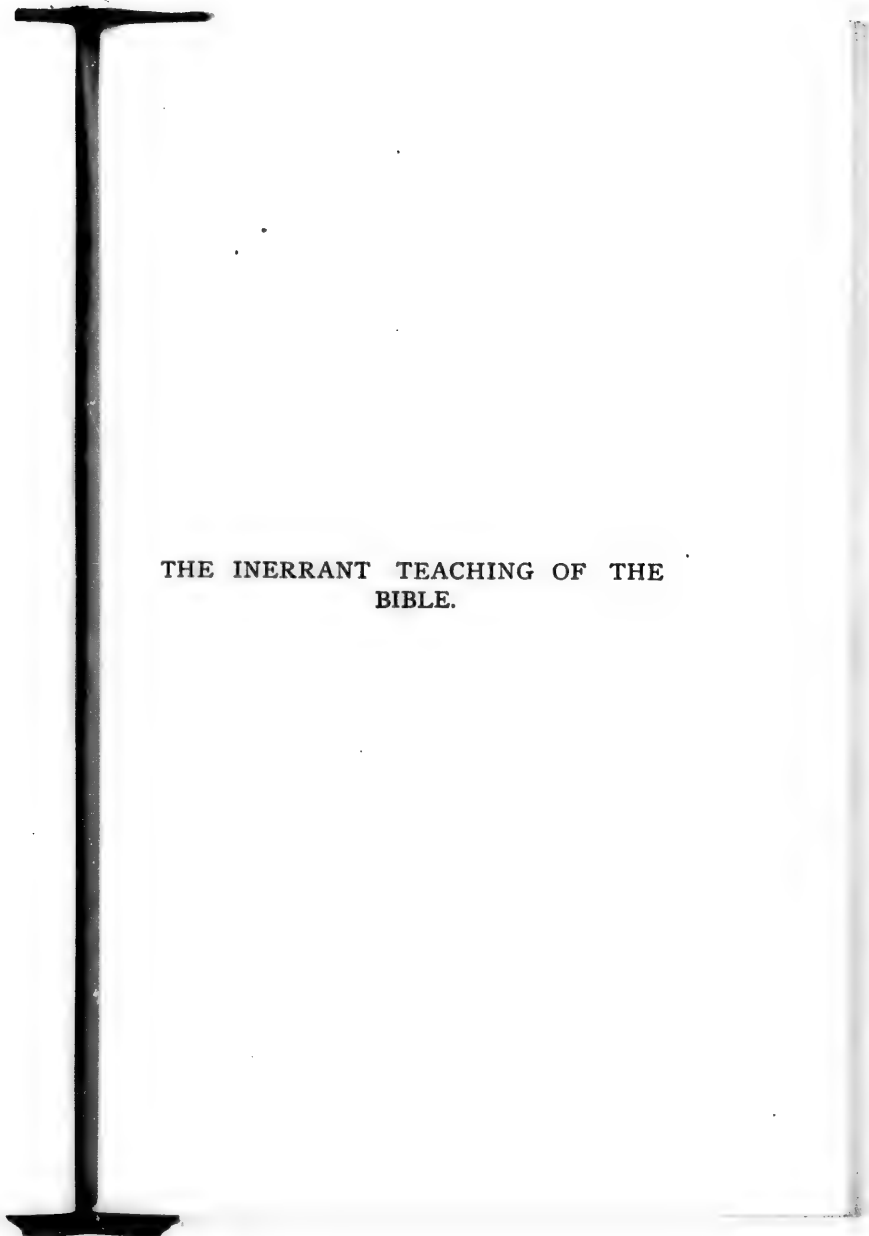
wisdom of the Mosaic law, the immortal Decalogue, and the seraphic Psalter; the Old Testament is indorsed by Christ as His Bible. Let Christ be true, though every critic be false. No criticism, whether higher or lower, has yet given us an absolute affirmation that reverses a single statement of our Lord's indorsement of His Bible as the highest revelation of the will of God then made to men, and as a safe guide to heaven. The Bible grows constantly upon all its students. It has revelations adapted to the spiritual attainments of all its readers. As was said long ago, it has depths in which a lamb can wade and others in which a leviathan can swim. In a Dresden gallery of royal gems, it is said that there is a remarkable silver egg; touch a spring and it opens disclosing a golden chicken; touch the chicken and it opens disclosing a crown studded with gems; touch the crown and it opens disclosing a magnificent diamond ring. Thus does the Bible disclose its charms to all its students, its gems becoming more and more valuable as the spiritual apprehension of men is the more capable of appreciating that value.

The Bible must be studied earnestly. It is not enough that we get something from it week by week as it is taught in the pulpit. Our study of it should be marked by docility, humility, and reverence. The greater our humility the vaster will be our attainment in this exalted study. Sir William Hamilton uttered a deep truth when he said:

"The highest reach of human science is the scientific recognition of human ignorance." And the Psalmist experienced the same truth when he sang: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." Dr George Dana Boardman, in his booklet, "The Two Bibles," quotes these suggestive questions from John Ruskin: "In what science is knowledge to be had cheap, or truth to be told over a velvet cushion, in half an hour's talk, every seventh day? Can you learn chemistry so, or geology, or anatomy? And do you expect to penetrate the secret of all secrets, and to know that whose price is above rubies, in so easy a fashion?"

Let us then recognize clearly the distinct design of the Bible. Let us study it constantly, reverently, and prayerfully; and, most of all, let us submit our hearts to its teaching. Then shall we sweetly experience the truth of our Lord's words—a truth as distinctly philosophic as it is profoundly spiritual: "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching."

I



THE INERRANT TEACHING OF THE
BIBLE.



V.

THE INERRANT TEACHING OF THE BIBLE.

HAS the Bible spoken with absolute truth regarding the deepest questionings of the human heart? Is it an infallible guide to human conduct? Can the longing soul hear in the Word of God the voice of the loving Father?

That God has spoken in nature is joyously, devoutly, and gratefully admitted. The Psalmist in the nineteenth psalm, in majestic personification, represents one day as calling to the next in the utterance of divine speech. He also represents night as whispering to her successor night, showing divine knowledge. He reminds us that God's testimony in nature is heard throughout the whole world. We have all seen the glory of nature in the mute but eloquent language of sunrise and sunset, in the white robe of winter, and in the vivid greenness of summer. We have listened to the music of nature's harp, which has been to us rhythmic, inspiring, and ennobling. The king of day and the queen of night alike voice God's great thoughts in His unwritten Bible, the Bible of Nature. Nowhere does the written Bible, the Bible of Scripture, contradict or even depreciate the

value of the teachings of God's "elder Scripture." We ought to study nature as sacred in its place and for its purpose. We ought to hear the voice of God echoing through the cathedral of nature, as Moses heard the voice of God in the burning bush. It is true that

"Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God ;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes,
The rest sit around it and pluck blackberries."

But as fallen beings estranged from God we long for a voice more personal, tender, and divine than that which nature utters in her most majestic orations or her tenderest whispers. We long for the voice that can tell us that God is a Spirit, that God is a Father as well as a Creator. We must hear God speak to us promising pardon for sin, strength for daily need, and transformation of human character into its own divine likeness. This voice comes to us in the Word of God with all the sweetness, tenderness, and authority of God Himself. Can this voice be trusted? This is the question of the hour in theological thinking.

OBJECTIONS TO INSPIRATION.

It is claimed by some that a belief in inspiration is vitiated, if not destroyed, because of literary defects in the Word of God. Even Luther accused Paul, in one instance, of false logic ; he also spoke disparagingly of the book of Esther. Still it is to

be observed that no one has ever more magnified Paul at other times, and the Scriptures as a whole, than did this same Luther. A true doctrine of inspiration may admit mistakes, or at least the possibility of mistakes, in historical and biographical statements, while it denies any error in matters of faith or morals. We may still firmly hold our conviction of the truth of Scripture, even if its inspired writers erred concerning things entirely unimportant from a religious point of view. We ought not to demand inerrancy on matters outside their special purpose, or perfection in logic or rhetoric on the part of the writers of Scripture. If they received without adulteration and presented without errancy invaluable spiritual truths, we ought not to ask more at their hands. They were appointed for this special purpose. The Bible, as we have seen, is God's book, and yet it is man's composition. We have here the subtle inter-relation of the divine and human element, as in the God-man, and also in all men who become God's men by the work of divine grace in salvation. It is easy to believe the discourses of Christ, although we may be in doubt regarding the lists of some of the names which carry his genealogy back to Abraham or to Adam. The Bible, as was long ago said, was not given to teach us how the heavens go, but how we may go to heaven. Scientific matters are related in popular rather than in scientific language. Perhaps the writers did not

always have in mind the proper view of scientific interpretation, as we now understand scientific teaching. It is astonishing that the Bible so often anticipates (as we shall later fully see) many of the scientific discoveries of modern times. Neither the Hindu Shasters nor any of the heathen cosmogonies can for a moment compare with the holy Scriptures in their general agreement with the *dicta* of modern science. It is not too much to say that the most advanced modern science has nowhere conclusively shown that any page of Scripture, when fairly interpreted, is scientifically untrue. But granting that there may be errors in Bible cosmogony, cosmology, or ethnology, or in some other related science, or in chronology or in some statistical enumeration, what does such an error signify in a document whose special purpose is the communication of spiritual truth? Grant, if any one so pleases, that there may be in the Word of God some logical irrelevancy, or some historical imperfection, we are not disturbed by the admission. Such defects might set at naught the theory of verbal inspiration, but they do not in any degree set aside the fact of inspiration. Our standard of judgment on some of these points differs from that of writers even a generation ago. The inspiration which would have corrected errors into which, according to our standard of logic, rhetoric, and science, writers of the day when the Bible was written might fall, would have been an utter failure

for the purpose for which it was given. If the writers of the Bible had striven to correct every scientific error on the part of their readers, their words would often have been meaningless, and occasionally would entirely have defeated their spiritual purpose. How ridiculous men of to-day make themselves when they find fault with the writers of Scripture because they did not use the nomenclature of modern science! Such terminology on their part would have made them as ridiculous as their critics now make themselves in their foolish demands. If only we have a true conception of what the design of the Bible is, an error in such matters will not give us a second thought. It is again repeated that inspiration is not, and never claimed to be, omniscience.

We must also make due allowance for the mistakes of copyists. Errors in matters of history are often mistakes in transcription; and rightly considered, such errors have no force of argument against the inspiration of the Bible. Certainly printers and proof-readers in our day are not infallible. Why should we expect copyists of the Word of God to be infallible? God wonderfully has preserved the Scriptures in these regards; their defensibility in this respect is well nigh miraculous. They are far more free from various readings than are other ancient manuscripts. It is not too much to affirm that no existing variation endangers any important doctrine of our faith, and this is a remark-

able fact. Some mistakes in numbers no doubt there are. We know that in the Hebrew language numbers are expressed by letters of the alphabet; and we know also that the addition or omission of a dot or a line will greatly change those numbers. These remarks apply to the numbers given in Bible history as engaged in battle, to the number of talents of silver and gold frequently stated, and to other round numbers in various other connections. But such matters are really of very little moment. The criticisms often pronounced upon the Scriptures upon this point are easily seen to be puerile to a laughable or to a provoking degree.

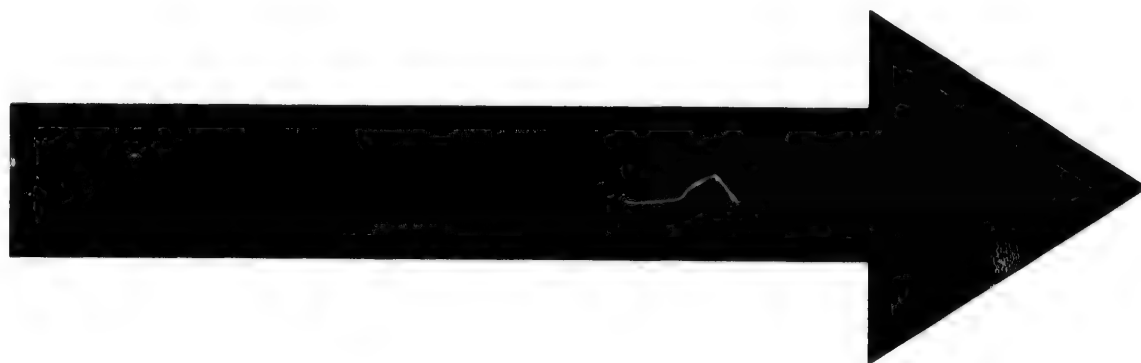
We must also make due allowance for the anthropopathic element in describing God. Revelation, as later we shall fully see, is progressive. Each type is appropriate to its own period and for its own purpose. Inspiration necessarily and properly took its writers and readers where it found both. We judge of other writings and writers by their time and their special purpose; so we judge of Homer, of Shakespeare, of Milton, and of all writers and thinkers and actors in the world's great theatre. Why should we otherwise judge Scripture writings and writers? Both these writers and writings grew in apprehension of truth and in spirituality of character under the divine intuition, and proofs of that growth are everywhere seen on the pages of Scripture. These writers never commend

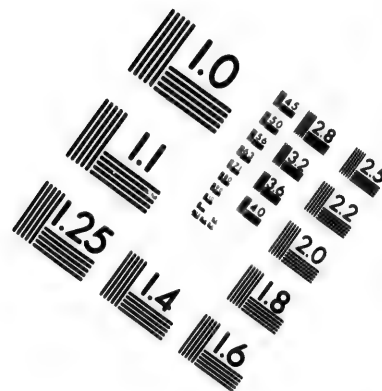
the evil deeds which they record; their reports always are absolutely impartial. The moral correctives needed in relation to the evil conduct described are given in other connections. The Old Testament is not to be judged by the light shining at the close of the nineteenth century; neither is it to be judged by the light which shone upon the world at the close of the canon of Scripture. Like all literature, it must be judged by the spirit of the time in which it was produced. We ought thus to judge of the treatment of the Canaanites, and so judged, it will be seen to be in entire harmony with the usage of the times. In this same spirit we are to judge of the vindictive character of the relatively few psalms which are known as imprecatory. The man who carries back the spirit of the Gospel as taught by Jesus Christ to the ages which long antedate His coming is a manifestly unfair critic. Such a method of criticism would not be tolerated regarding merely secular literature and the great characters of secular history.

Granting, then, that there are occasional errors in history, that there are slips in syllogistic reasoning, that there are mistakes in figures, chiefly due to the fallibility of copyists—the marvel is that such errors are so few, at most—our faith in the Word of God as an inspired rule of life is in no way shaken. With all our boasted improvements in the printing-press, it is still almost impossible to guard against errors in books to-day. After

three or four readings of proof, mistakes are still found equally to the surprise and annoyance of authors, proof-readers, and printers. The marvel is that the Scriptures have been preserved so free from error as they are even in the judgment of their fiercest critics. It was important that the writers of the Bible should use language in such germinal form as to be understandable by those to whom they wrote; and they yet use language which is capable of such expansion as to be in harmony with the latest conclusions of the most advanced science of our day. Many statements of Scripture which once were obscure, or apparently untrue, have become clear with the progress of science, and have been proved entirely truthful by the various discoveries of recent times. Light is increasing daily. Witnesses for God's Word are coming from every quarter. The spade is bringing them forth from the sands and débris of many countries and centuries. Philology and archæology join hands in testifying to the truth of holy Scripture. The widest erudition joins hands with the simplest faith in indorsing the old Bible as indeed the very word of God. If we patiently wait, earnestly study, and devoutly trust, all obscurities will finally disappear, all doubts will vanish, and all problems will find their solution. We may with Dr. Strong quote regarding Biblical obscurities what Isocrates said of the work of Heraclitus: "What I understand of it is so excellent

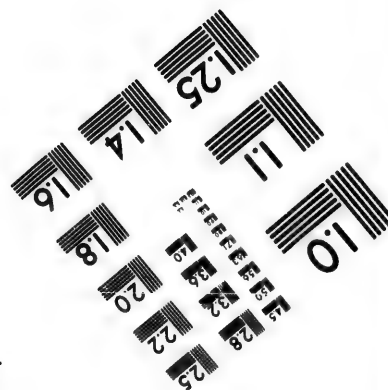
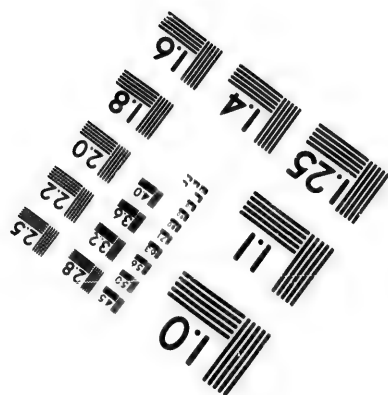
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that I can draw conclusions from it concerning what I do not understand."

PROOFS OF INSPIRATION.

To deny that the Bible is a divine book on the ground of its real or supposed imperfections is as unreasonable as to deny that the world was created by God because of its imperfections, or to deny that Jesus Christ was perfect simply because His character is inexplicable, judged by the standards of human conduct usually recognized among men. We must hold clearly in mind, as already earnestly urged, the purpose for which the Scripture was given, in order that we may rightly judge of its character. We have no right to criticise the Bible because it does not contain truths which it never was designed to teach. As well might we find fault with a volume of poetry because it does not contain all needful knowledge of mathematical problems; as well might we object to an oratorio because it did not give us knowledge of hydrostatics or hydraulics. Men have been most unwise, and so in the broad sense uncritical, because unreasonably critical in their treatment of the Bible. The interpretation of the Bible has suffered alike from cynical foes and heedless friends. We should judge it chiefly as a work of religious faith and life; and in this respect it is an infallible guide to duty on earth and to glory in heaven. This is its chief function; and this exalted aim ennobles it

above all other books. Thus it is appropriately a divine-human work. Its specific design, its exalted duty, its distinctive glory, must necessarily limit its range of topics and its method of discussion. We do not expect it to be a treatise on railways, steamships, telegraphs, or telephones. If it completely discusses the sublimest and divinest of themes, that ought to be glory enough for one volume. Its chief purpose, as we have seen, its divine prerogative, is that it is a text-book of religion. If I have a guide-book to India giving me correctly the time-tables on railways and steamships, and a thousand other things immediately connected with my journey in India, I shall not reject it even if I find in it some incidental allusion to the United States containing a slight error in American history. Its function is as a guide to India. It may still be that to an admirable degree, even though it contain some erroneous allusions to botany, geology, or some other science or history entirely unconnected with its purpose. It is true that some of the Bible's doctrines involve historical facts, but it is easy to make all necessary distinctions between historical facts of vital importance and those of merely incidental relation to the purpose for which the Bible was given. The existence of scientific errors in the Bible is not yet proven, and probably it is impossible to prove that it contains such errors. A careful and unprejudiced study of Joshua x. 12-14, for exam-

ple, will conclusively show that the Bible does not affirm that the sun and moon stood still, or even that Joshua prayed to God that they might pause in their course. The passage shows, when properly translated and interpreted, that Joshua did not pray to God at all, but that he simply apostrophized the sun and moon. The time has come when we must make sharp distinctions between the revelations of Scripture and the interpretations of man. The time has come when this passage should no longer be a stumbling-block to either saints or sinners. It has too long received a degree of importance, alike from the friends and foes of revelation, which when truly interpreted it does not deserve. This is a passage which human interpretation and not divine revelation has made difficult.

DIRECT PROOFS.

The gospels claim that Christ promised inspiration to His apostles (John xiv. 16, 17, 26; xv. 26, 27; xvi. 13-15). It is also claimed in several passages that in accordance with Christ's promise the apostles received inspiration in their teachings. Only a few passages of this class need here be stated: Acts iv. 8; xi. 12; xv. 28; 1 Peter i. 12. The apostles did not hesitate to put themselves on a level with the Old Testament writers, and to these writers they granted inspiration. They thus claim for themselves the degree of inspiration which they attribute to the writings of the more ancient

Scripture: 2 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Peter i. 19-21. The meaning of this passage quoted from Timothy has been much discussed; it refers, of course, to the Old Testament. The Revised Version gives the rendering, "Every Scripture inspired of God is," etc. Is this a true rendering? According to the common rendering of this passage, inspiration is affirmed of all Scripture; but according to this later rendering the affirmation regarding inspiration is greatly limited. One hesitates to declare his conviction that the common rendering is the true one, when some scholarly men and the Revised Version seem to prefer another interpretation. Scholarship, however, can match scholarship on both sides of this subject. Rules of Greek syntax can be marshalled to show that the common rendering is conformable to the recognized laws of this most accurate of all languages. The rendering of the Revised Version is liable to strong objections. When two adjectives are closely joined—as are the words *Theopneustos* and *ophelimos*, "God-breathed" and "profitable"—by the conjunction *kai*, both must be predicates, if either is. It is quite certain that there is good authority for the older interpretation, if one wishes to hold it as here taught. It is difficult to believe that the apostle meant to affirm that divine inspiration belongs to a part of Scripture but not to the whole, or that he meant to give us a rule by which to judge whether or not any part of the Scripture is inspired, that rule

or criterion being simply its utility. Who is to be the judge of its utility? If that criterion be adopted, then every man makes his own Bible. Neither Christ nor any of His apostles ever named a distinction between different parts of Old Testament Scripture. The doctrine plainly taught in the text under consideration, and the doctrine sustained by many other Scriptures, is that all the writings called the sacred Scriptures are divinely inspired. In the Old Testament the authors frequently testify to the divine origin of their message. They use such language as "the word of the Lord came," or "the Lord spake by His servant." We know that the prophets were specially called of God. The New Testament writers make most explicit statements regarding the inspiration of the writers of the Old Testament. The inspiration of the New Testament is also affirmed by the apostles insisting upon the infallibility of their words (1 Cor. ii. 13; 1 Thess. ii. 13). No one can intelligently affirm that the apostles were not competent witnesses, neither will any one dare say that they were dishonest or fanatical. Their lives were singularly transparent and beautifully consecrated. Apart from the superintendence of the Spirit of God over their lives and words, we cannot account for the purity of the one or the divinity of the other. With all the diversity in the style of the various writers, there is such a unity in thought as to suggest a superintending spirit

which ruled over the work of all. These writers never wrote with the thought that they were contributing each his part toward harmonious and immortal literature. Each wrote out of his own individual taste and with his special purpose and design; and yet all contributed toward one complete whole to such a degree as to evoke the surprise, admiration, and enthusiasm of all unprejudiced critics.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE.

The nature of the contents of the Scriptures also furnishes a strong argument in favor of their inspiration. The inherent excellencies of both Testaments witness to their heavenly origin. The New Testament particularly stands out in marked separation from all contemporaneous literature. In matter, effect, and motive it is beyond all comparison superior to all other literature of its own day or any other time. In many respects, in its thought and expression it is totally opposed to the entire spirit of the age in which it was written, and to the opinions of the people to whom it was primarily given. The development of literature in different countries is recognized among all literary students; but the New Testament, in its pure thought, heavenly atmosphere, and divine influence, stands apart from all the law of movement, of progress, and of attainment among uninspired writers of every country and century. The

volume possesses a unity, a singleness of purpose, and an elevation of tone which stamp it as a work alike of human genius and of divine inspiration. Its statements are characterized by a sublime simplicity and a divine sublimity. Its calmness, comprehension, reticence, and majesty differentiate it from all the literatures of the world: Well may Van Oosterzee say: "He who will acknowledge in Scripture nothing higher than a purely human character comes into collision not only with our Lord's word and that of His witnesses, but also with the Christian consciousness of all ages. It is impossible to account for these exalted qualities on any other hypothesis than that the writers of this uncommon volume were under the special influence of God in thought and speech." These records have been subjected to every conceivable form of criticism, and yet they have remained unimpeached and unimpeachable. There stands God. These records are as much superior to the traditions of mere men as Christ is superior to all false Christs, who for a time have challenged the thought of men simply to disappear in total silence or to linger before men in complete dishonor.

It would seem that in the apostolic Church inspiration was not confined to the apostles. Portions of Scripture were written by others than apostles, and were yet in harmony with the spirit, doctrines, and facts of the apostles in the Scriptures acknowledged to be theirs. To this class

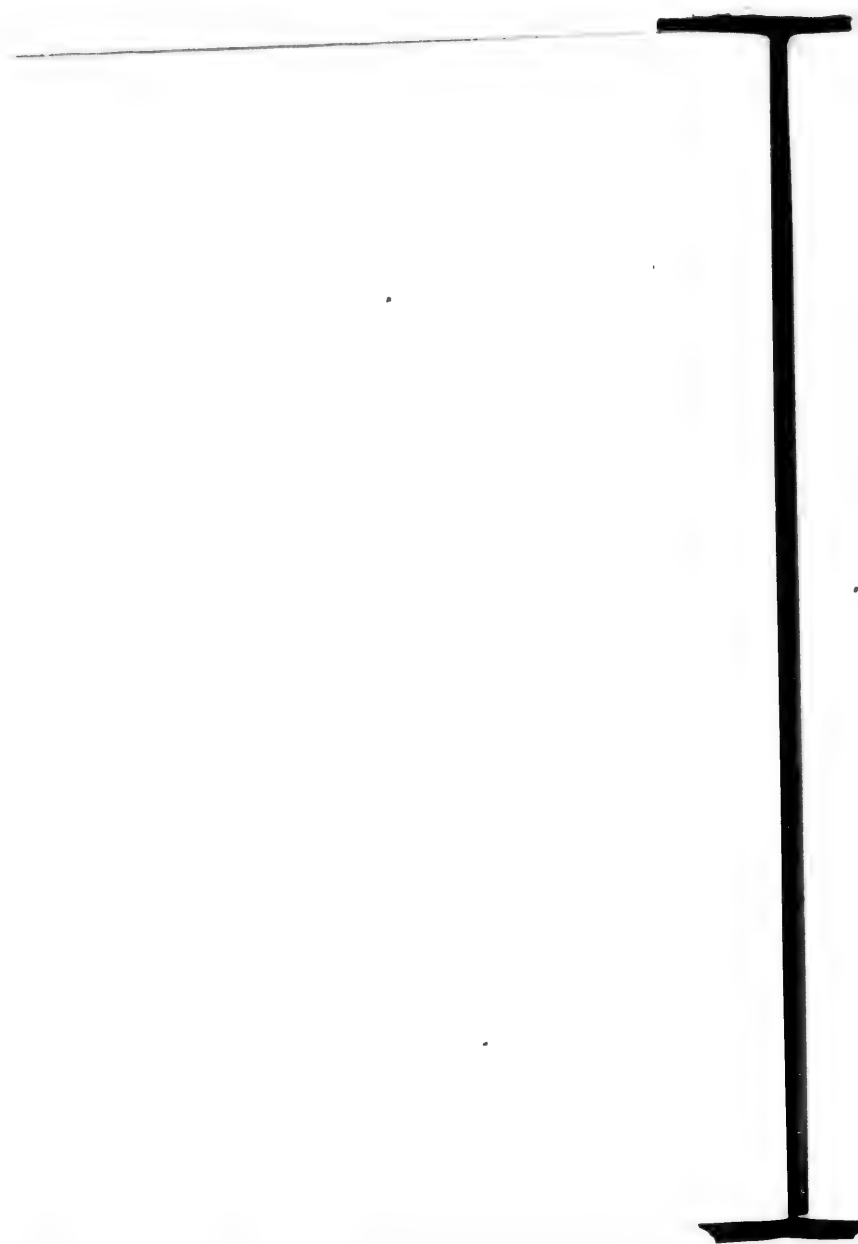
belong possibly the Epistle to the Hebrews and certainly the Gospels of Mark and Luke. All testimony points to Mark as the companion and secretary of Peter, 'from whose early teachings he probably composed his gospel; and it is certain that in his writings Luke had the assistance and indorsement of the apostle Paul. The Old Testament existed long before Christ's days; even the Septuagint translations were extant for one and a half centuries previous to that time. The Old Testament was Christ's Bible. He loved it; He quoted it, and He indorsed it, but He never once criticised it. The Jews of the time of Christ universally recognized the Old Testament writings as sacred; and the progress of our investigations in history, archæology, and exploration all tends to confirm the statements of the ancient Scriptures. Repeatedly did Christ cite the Old Testament as undisputed authority (Matt. v. 17; xi. 13; xvi. 4; xxii. 31; xxvi. 54, and in many other passages). The apostles in all their writings (in 2 Tim. iii. 16, and 2 Peter i. 20, 21) directly assert the inspiration of the Old Testament.

From the days of primitive Christianity the Bible has been received as a book containing the truest history, the sublimest poetry, the deepest philosophy, the purest morality, and the highest revelation. "Search the Scriptures," said Christ, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me." The Bible

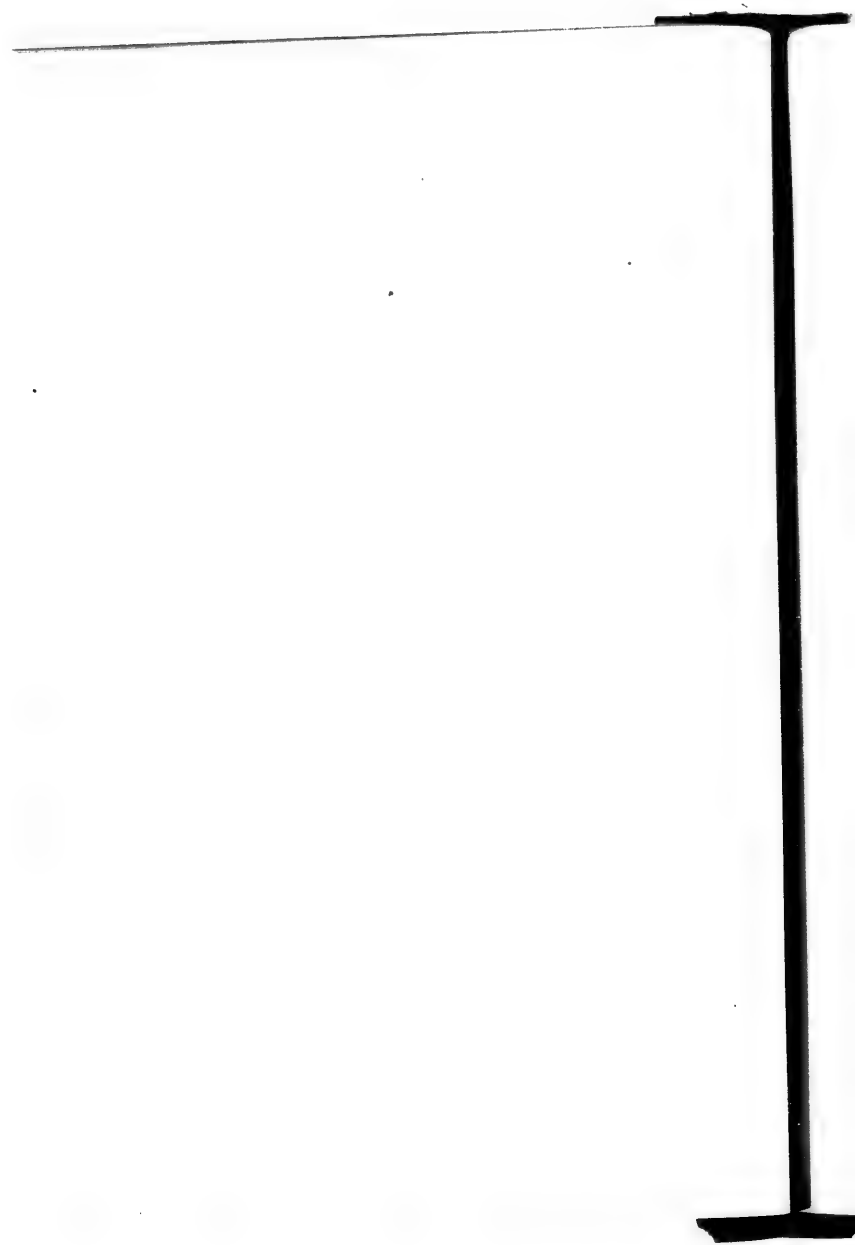
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has no rival. It is the Mont Blanc, it is the Himalaya of literature. What Christ, the living Word, was as compared with other men on the earth, that the Bible, as the written word, is to-day as compared with other books. It comes to us with the authority of Heaven, and it guides us to the blessedness of heaven. Give this unique book your earnest, believing, prayerful study. Loving obedience to its teachings will furnish the best evidence of its inspiration. They and only they who obey Christ can truly know His doctrine. Let us bless God that the Bible, as His highest revelation, is worthy the praise of saints and seraphs; and that it might well be the theme of redeemed sinners in heaven if it contained only this one verse—the Bible in miniature, a verse containing sufficient truth, if fully believed, to save the whole earth, a verse which shows us the very heart of the eternal God: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).



THE PECULIAR AUTHORITY OF THE
BIBLE.



VI.

THE PECULIAR AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

It would seem from the record in the last verse of the seventh chapter of Matthew that the dominant impression produced upon the people by the discourse of our Lord known as the "Sermon on the Mount" was its peculiar authority. The people never before had heard the law defined as on this occasion. They never before observed the high standard of morality which now was erected for their guidance; and they never before heard a discourse so simple in thought and so spiritual in purpose. But the conviction which forced itself upon them as the controlling thought of the occasion was the unique authority of this sublime discourse. They experienced the commanding power of our Lord's doctrine; they recognized the perspicuity of His statements and the persuasiveness of His exhortations; and especially they realized that His arguments were not only reasonable but also resistless. They could not but discover the wide difference between His discourse and the locutions of the Scribes and Pharisees. These latter dealt with frivolous cases of casuistry; they made puerile

distinctions, and they were engaged in ridiculous splitting of controversial hairs. They also quoted now one authority and now another; but in opposition to this method of public instruction our Lord dealt in great, profound, holy, and sublime principles. And yet His words were so amazingly simple that even a child could apprehend their essential meanings.

What is true of this discourse is in a measure true of the entire Bible. It deals at times in careful argumentation and cogent reasoning, and occasionally in syllogistic ratiocination; but it must still be affirmed that the Bible as a whole is declarative rather than argumentative. It strikes out a new path for all subsequent thinkers and writers. There were no human models in such high and spiritual instruction as guides for its inspired writers. It occupies a position that is peculiar and solitary. It imitates no other volume; it is independent of all other books, scarcely ever alluding to any volume or writer, while it pursues its own lofty path under divine guidance. It rises above the great field of ordinary literature as does the Himalayan range from the plains of India; it lifts itself in its symmetrical and supreme beauty above all other literature, as Mount Tabor rises in its singularity and sublimity above the plain of Esdraelon. Gilfillan has compared the Bible in this respect to Mont Blanc, which does not measure itself with Jura, does not name the other mountain

"save when in thunder it talks to her of God," and then does she

" Answer from her misty throne
Back to the joyous Alps."

He reminds us that John never speaks of Plato, nor Paul of Demosthenes, nor Jesus of any writer save Moses and the prophets. This characteristic of the Bible cannot fail to attract the attention and evoke the admiration of every true student. There is on its pages a degree of originality not found in any other volume. Every reader of exegetical and theological writers has often been impressed with the fact that each is greatly, and often properly and even unavoidably, indebted to all his predecessors for the thoughts he utters and occasionally for the expressions he employs. It is startling how few really original, or even greatly suggestive, ideas are found in any volume written by an uninspired man. Few of these volumes are of sufficient interest to justify a second reading; it would be difficult to name a dozen volumes which are worthy of three readings. Even those pages which we have marked upon our first reading as especially worthy of our consideration, we have all found upon a second examination not to be so valuable as at first blush we had supposed. Probably there is no actor living who could week after week, especially without all the accessories of the theatre, for fifty, thirty, twenty, or even ten years hold an audience in any part of the world by his exposi-

tions of the dramas of Shakespeare or any other dramatist, however great. But a good preacher will hold congregations during all these years, with growing interest on their part and increasing power on his own part. The Bible has never been exhausted; it is absolutely inexhaustible. It has given rise to thousands of libraries, and it will call into being thousands more in the ages to come. It has inspired genius in every department of intellectual activity. The men who read it most constantly and prayerfully are, of all others, the men who are most profoundly impressed with the wonders it contains and the manifold blessings it imparts. It brings the human mind into conscious touch with the great thoughts of God, and thus it stimulates all human power to its greatest capacity.

THE AUTHORITY OF GOD.

The authority of God is clearly revealed in both the Old Testament and in the New. "Thus saith the Lord" is the highest authority for human conduct. Many lose much to-day as the result of mistaken methods of Biblical criticism in that the voice of the personal Jehovah is so largely silenced as the highest authority for creed and conduct. Instead of hearing the voice of God, many now too often hear only the voice of some unknown redactor of some unknown writings on many comparatively unknown subjects. The Scriptures with these persons are only this composite redaction, and so are

without authority and without attraction. The prophet of old stood in the immediate presence of God. We need to return to his faith, and so we shall have something of his power. With uncovered head and obedient heart he listened to the voice of the Eternal. This voice, with its divine authority over his conduct, the obedient prophet never for a moment questioned. Occasionally, however, there was a disobedient prophet, as was Jonah. He for a time determined to lay aside his commission. This is probably what is meant when it is said that he went out "from the presence of the Lord." He knew quite too much of God's omnipresence to suppose that he could literally escape from the presence of the Almighty; he implied by this language that he gave up his standing in God's presence as His servant and minister. He was obliged afterward to go and utter the message which God had commanded. Only as God's prophets engage in His work in this particular can they really be influential with men. Obedience toward God gives power toward men.

What is true of God's prophets was, in its adaptation and measure, true also of God's poets. They were taught in no school of poetry or philosophy. They stood in the immediate presence of God. He gave them their theme, their power, and their immortality, as they gave Him the homage of their hearts and the devotion of their lives. They sang the song taught them by the great God, as they

joyously and reverently stood in His presence waiting for His inspiration.

AUTHORITY OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

A similar authority was manifested by Christ Himself, as we have already seen. He spoke without hesitancy and with absolute authority. God must be dogmatic. He is of right the only genuine dogmatist in the universe. Should God become peccant, or even hesitant, He would cease to be God. Could God sin, there would be a throneless universe, a lawless cosmos, and a Godless world. The God who could be guilty of wrong is an impossible conception. He is the infinitely best being in the universe. If there be a better being in the universe than God, that better being is God. His perfection is His claim upon us for adoration. Why do we worship God? Not because He is omnipotent. His omnipotence might crush us, but it could not secure our love, evoke our devotion, or command our reverence. We worship God because He is infinite in goodness, boundless in love, and spotless in holiness. But while God is thus dogmatic, He is never fickle, never capricious, never vacillating, and never reasonless.

All that is true in all these regards of God the Father is equally true of God the Son. Jesus Christ spoke with absolute authority. He never hesitated in the formation or expression of His

opinion. A hesitating Christ would be a valueless, if not an impossible Christ. We never hear Him saying, "I hope so, I trust so, I think so." Such language if ascribed to Him would startle us into rightful scepticism as to the correctness of the ascription. He discussed the greatest themes possible to the human mind. He uttered the most terrible woes that ever fell upon human ears; but He baptized His most solemn denunciations in tears of divine-human love. It is not too much to say that we had scarcely known hell but for the teachings of the loving Christ. It is simple truth to declare that He uncovered the pit to the eyes of an unbelieving or a wondering world. He spoke with the utmost familiarity of God and of eternity. He was as familiar with His Father in heaven as He was with His reputed father on earth. He stepped with the utmost facility and naturalness from time into eternity, and from eternity back into time, showing equal familiarity with both. He issued His commands with all the authority and sublimity of a heavenly potentate. His last great commission was the most wonderful declaration ever made in the ears of men. He uttered a positively new thought when He commanded His disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Familiarity with this command blunts the edge of our wonder; but if we take in all the circumstances we shall rightly appreciate the uniqueness of this wonderful command. No founder

of any religion up to this time ever dreamed of establishing a universal religion. One of the glories of many of the religions of the earth, according to their own conceptions, is found in their exclusiveness. Different nations had their gods many and lords many. The worship of these deities was confined to certain definite localities. Some were gods of mountains, others of groves, and still others of streams and fountains. Their worship was incapable of transference; it belonged to some peculiar state of society, whether barbarously savage or classically civilized. It is true that among the more advanced of the nations of antiquity there were men who rose above the vulgar prejudices and ignorant superstitions of their times. These men of larger thought at times had some conception of a religion without limitations of race or country. But the great majority believed in a religion that was local, or at most ethnic or national. It is true that among the Jews sacred books were circulating in which there were hints of a future gathering of all nations under one faith and one Lord. But as a matter of fact, these hints were universally misunderstood; and the Jew of Christ's time was the narrowest and most bigoted of men. His dress, food, social customs, and religious ceremonies separated him from the rest of the race; and he rejoiced in this national separation. But here was a young man, reputedly the son of a Galilean tradesman, without a formal creed, without an army, without a cabinet,

apparently without wealth or power, declaring a project and issuing a command more original, comprehensive, and sublime than ever before emanated from a human brain. This event is unique in human history. This conception, for originality, comprehensiveness, and daring, entitles Christ to receive the crown as the foremost thinker of the human race. Had He done nothing more than originate and disseminate the idea that it was desirable and practicable to unite the world under one great system of belief, to suggest that there was a religion that was equally needed by, intended for, and adapted to all classes and conditions of men in all countries and centuries, He would have secured for Himself the honor of being the most original thinker the world had produced and the greatest benefactor known to humanity. Here stands Christ, crowned with honor and glory, and invested with an authority, originality, and power never possessed by and never before ascribed to any man of woman born.

The apostles share in their measure in this consciousness of authority. Away over the rocky hills of Palestine and Asia Minor, away over the islands of the historic Ægean Sea—*islands which became stepping-stones for the feet of the "sacramental host of God's elect"*—went these messengers of the cross to deliver the message given them by their divine Lord and Master. They realized, what we must realize, that His Word is the highest

authority. The Bible, whether giving the teachings of the Father, the Son, or its inspired human authors, is a book of finalities. We cannot but feel, while we listen to the commands upon its sacred pages, that the last word on any subject discussed has been spoken. We do not so feel when we listen to the most authoritative utterances of Socrates or Aristotle, of Polycarp or Chrysostom, of Luther or Calvin, of Lord Bacon or Sir William Hamilton. We find in the allocutions of all these men evidences of imperfect knowledges, of partial conceptions, of inadequate reasonings, and of inconclusive decisions. After reading any great but merely human author of an early day we readily see that time has shown that some of his conclusions are erroneous and that many of his positions have become obsolete or of doubtful authority. But the teachings of the Word of God are as much needed by us to-day, and are as applicable to the wants of to-day, as they were at any time in the past. They never become obsolete nor even obsolescent. The Bible is like a flowing fountain, pouring out its refreshing waters upon all generations and bringing fertility and every other blessing in every country and century; the Bible is like the sun in its undiminished and undiminishable supply, and in its abundant benediction to all men in all times. Men have thought and written upon the Bible as upon no other book in the world; and yet they have not scaled its lofty

heights nor fathomed its profound depths. God's Word is like Himself, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

The thought of the divine authority of their message gave the apostles no small part of their remarkable power. They could not but speak the things which they had seen and heard, their hearts overflowed with the blessedness of their message. They could appeal to the profoundest convictions even of their bitter foes that it was better to obey God rather than man. The man who realizes that he is but the voice of God becomes by that realization a resistless force; he is simply the harbinger of his Lord. He is simply the messenger of the King of Glory. When Latimer stood before Henry VIII., he reminded himself that he was in the presence of the king in whose power his earthly life was. He must, therefore, speak with great wisdom, restraint, and consideration. But he reminded himself also that he was in the presence of the King of Heaven. He must, therefore, speak the whole counsel of God, whether the earthly king would hear or forbear. This last consideration enabled him so to fear God that he had no fear of man. In this respect he experienced a kinship with the apostle Paul, and with all the disciples and apostles of the Lord Jesus, and with the Lord Jesus Himself.

PULPIT AUTHORITY TO-DAY.

It is sometimes declared that the pulpit of to-day has lost, or is losing, its power. If that be true to any extent, the deplorable result is due in part to the fact that in some degree the preacher has failed to recognize himself as the ambassador of Jesus Christ. This recognition the apostle Paul constantly held in mind. Speaking for himself and those associated with him, he was able to say: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. v. 20). The true preacher recognizes that he bears a commission issued by God, countersigned by Jesus Christ, and sealed by the Holy Ghost. Such a man must preach the preaching which God commands. He has no self-life, but his true life is hid with Christ in God. He must have no self-will, but his will is sweetly blended with the will of his Lord and Master.

We must emphasize the idea constantly kept in mind by our fathers—the idea of a divine call to preach the everlasting Gospel. The reality of this call carries with it the necessity of the most thorough preparation possible, in body, mind, and soul, for executing this divine commission. When the preacher recognizes fully that he is an ambassador for God, he will be girded with strength, guided by wisdom, and constrained by love. Only as he

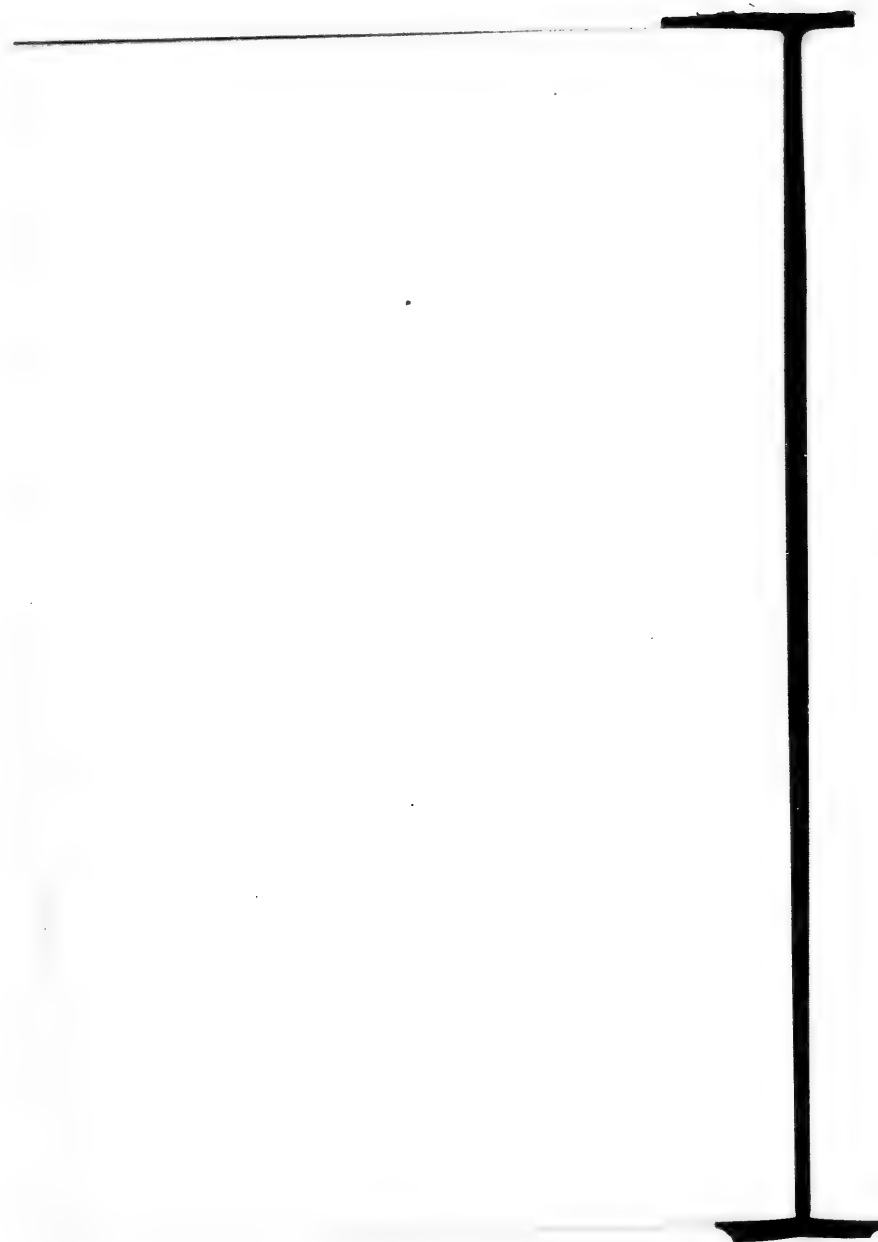
fails to realize his relations to God can he fail in the authoritative delivery of his inspired message. The recognition of his true relation will give him profoundest humility in the presence of God and at the same time holy boldness in the eyes of men.

Thus it will come to pass that the pulpit of to-day will possess some of the original authority and divinity of the times of prophets and apostles. When the preacher simply regards himself as called upon to testify what congregations desire and then prepares to give them that preaching, whether or not it be in harmony with the declarations of the Bible, he is shorn of power and stripped of glory, and he to some degree dishonors himself and his message in the sight of God and man. Perhaps there is nothing more wonderful even in the Bible than the twofold sense of deepest personal humility and loftiest imputed and imparted authority, on the part of prophets, psalmists, disciples, and apostles. Once more we must allow this old book to have its place in the pulpit of our churches, on the shelves of our libraries, and in the hearts of our congregations. This book is the rightful regent of the world. It appeals alike to the reason, the affection, and the imagination. It comes in no humble garb, and it assumes no lowly attitude as it solicits our attention. It speaks with an authority which belongs to no other book ever known among men. It demands our attention, promising the largest rewards when its precepts

are obeyed, and threatening the direst calamities when its warnings are neglected. This book will go on shining as does the sun; its light cannot be extinguished. Its voice can never be hushed, its testimony can never be contradicted, and its invitations will never entirely lose the charm of their sweetness and tenderness. There is nothing in the Bible that is more miraculous than is the Bible itself. Written as it has been throughout the course of sixteen or seventeen centuries, in different languages, by many persons in various social, intellectual, and religious conditions, it speaks to us to-day as the contemporary of the latest literature and as the exponent of the highest religious thought. Apart from its divine origin, there is in it more exquisite literary beauty, more tender description of nature, more pure morality, and greater spiritual sublimity, than in all other books ever composed, in any land or language. As Christ, the incarnate Word, spoke with an authority peculiarly His own, so the Bible, as the revealed Word, speaks with an authority as truly unique as are its divine origin, its marvellous perpetuity, and its exalted morality. By this word we are to be judged, and by it we are to be justified or condemned. He who opposes the Word of God assumes an enormous responsibility. Well shall it be for pulpit and pew when both bow low in the presence of God and His inspired Word, saying: "Speak, Lord, and we Thy servants shall promptly, fully, joyously hear and obey Thy voice."

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THE INSTRUCTIVE RETICENCE OF
THE BIBLE.



VII.

THE INSTRUCTIVE RETICENCE OF THE BIBLE.

EDWARD VI., king of England, was the son of Henry VIII. and Jane Seymour. He was born at Hampton Court, October 12, 1537. He had but little encouragement, at least on his father's side, toward a religious life; and yet he early developed marked religious tendencies. He died under the age of sixteen, and was thus too young when king to exercise pre-eminent or even powerful influence on the statesmen or tendencies of his times. His coronation was an occasion of marked interest. Three swords were brought and laid before him at one stage in the ceremonies. These swords were the emblem of royal power in three different directions. Glancing at these swords, he paused a moment, and then said: "Bring another; there is one I need most of all—'the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.'" The Bible was brought, the ceremony proceeded, and from that day to the coronation in her sweet girlhood of the noble Queen Victoria who now sways a sceptre over the mightiest empire the world has ever known, the Bible has retained its place in the coronation ceremonies of the kings and queens of Great Britain. It is an interesting fact that the Bible is the only

symbol employed at the inauguration of the President of the United States. It occupied its usual conspicuous place when President McKinley, in the presence of uncounted thousands, took upon himself the oath of his high office.

The tourist in Spain is certain to visit the old city of Toledo, and while there he will find no place more interesting, not excepting the ancient and glorious cathedral and the *zocodover* or "square market," than the *Fabrica de Armas*, the manufactory of Toledan swords. This is a huge, rectangular building, standing on the right bank of the Tagus. It was erected in 1788, but long before that time the Toledan blades had become justly famous. Iberian weapons, and the fondness of the people for them, are mentioned both by Livy and Polybius. The secret of manufacturing these famous swords the Moors carried from Damascus to Toledo. The temper of these swords is so remarkable that it is said they can be curled up like the mainspring of a watch without suffering any injury in the operation. The true swordsman must know his weapon. He must be absolutely familiar with its delicate temper, the sharpness of its edge, and the strength of its body. He must have a quick eye and a supple wrist, as well as a trusty blade.

All true believers are swordsmen for truth and God. In their case also perfect familiarity with their weapon is necessary to success in its use. It is a remarkable fact that in the enumeration of the

Christian's armor given by the apostle Paul in the sixth chapter of Ephesians there is but one offensive weapon, while there are five pieces of defensive armor; and this one offensive weapon is not the great Roman spear, but the sword, the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. No man can use this sword aright except he be familiar with its temper and all its characteristics. One element of weakness in the Church to-day is the unfamiliarity of so many Christian men and women with the peculiarities of the Word of God. Few could give an intelligent analysis of any one book in the Bible; fewer could give the trend of inspired thought in the gospels or epistles; and still fewer could trace the development of the divine purpose from Genesis to Malachi. One purpose of this series of Sunday-night lectures is to give the people additional familiarity with the sword of the Spirit. There is no sword like it. When properly wielded by pulpit and pew, the slain of the Lord will be many. No minister can have his coronation of honor, power, and glory unless ever by his side there shall lie (except when it is actually in his hand) the sword of the Spirit.

OFTEN MISINTERPRETED.

A statement of some of the characteristics of the Bible in this lecture and in other lectures will help those who hear and read these words better to understand and to use this celestial weapon. It is

to be affirmed that few books have been so greatly misrepresented as the Word of God. Many critics have misrepresented it because of their profound ignorance of its design and its substance. They have practically acted upon the principle which governed Sidney Smith, who, it is said, affirmed that he did not read books which he was to review; the reading of the volumes might prejudice the judgment which he might form and express. It would be simply risible on our part, if the act were not so culpable on their part, that so many critics of the Word of God have written out of their ignorance and not from their knowledge, and that so many others have been governed by a spirit of malevolence. This spirit is manifested on every page of their writings. Their criticisms are far less malefic than they otherwise would be, because the evil spirit which inspired them is so constantly manifested. They write with a bitterness difficult to explain, were it not for the deep-seated evil in the human heart. Still others, like Rousseau, oppose the book because it condemns the sins to which they are inclined. When the Bible condemns our sins, we must either turn against the sins or against the preacher and the truth which point out the sins which thus bring us into condemnation. Many critics of the Bible get their opinions at second hand, and some must go much further back in order to find the origin of their opposition to the inspired Word. No one can read

the current literature in opposition to the Bible without discovering that many of the opinions and criticisms of to-day are just the revamped objections of Volney, Paine, and others of their class. These objections to the Bible are simply old foes with new faces. The Bible has long been in ecclesiastical warfare what the Malakoff tower was during the Crimean war. We remember that fierce battle was waged around this historic tower. The number and ferocity of these battles indicate the importance which friend and foe attached to the possession of this stronghold. It was felt that here was the key to the opening of Russia to the allied forces. General Todleben erected earth-works and fortifications by his rare genius, and these works for many months kept the armies of France and England at bay. The Malakoff and the Redan, now historically familiar, were the most formidable of these fortifications. The siege of Sebastopol, the "august city," ranks among the most famous sieges in history. It lasted for eleven months. These famous towers sustained repeated bombardments. Finally, on September 8th, 1855, the Malakoff and Redan were captured, and the Russians were forced to evacuate these strongholds.

Though our Malakoff may be violently attacked, it can never be captured. The Bible possesses a vitality all its own. What has been said of the Church may with literal truth be said of the Bible;

it is an anvil which has worn out a great many hammers, and it certainly is prepared to wear out a great many more. If men but knew the Bible, they could not help but admire it for its archaic history, its seraphic poetry, its resistless logic, and its profound spirituality. Sir Thomas Lawrence tells us that when he visited the famous picture galleries at Rome at first he saw but little to attract his attention and to evoke his admiration. But he soon discovered that the fault was not in the picture galleries but in himself. He was too unfamiliar with the treasures of art stored in these famous galleries fully to appreciate them when his first visit was made. We are told that for six successive months he continued his visits daily; day after day, as the artistic sense was developed in his soul, remarkable beauties appeared in the paintings. Where at first he saw nothing to win admiration, later he saw transcendent beauty. Locke has well said that it takes a sunny eye to see the sun. So it takes a clear eye, a true life, and a pure heart rightly to see the glory of God and to feel His presence on the pages of His inspired book. This blessed book is an overflowing fountain, unexhausted and inexhaustible. For these hundreds of years it has flowed through the centuries, and its stream is undiminished to-day, as it goes scattering untold blessings on its joyous way. The Bible is like the sun in the abundance of light which emanates from it, and in the variety

of blessings of which it is the source. It comes to us to-day with all its original beauty and power. All its true students find it to be an armory filled with weapons of celestial temper, a divine laboratory of roborant medicines, and a mine deep as the heart of the earth and abounding in noblest wealth. Its truths fall upon our souls softly as the dew, and yet they are resistless in their power as the storm. If men were robbed of the Bible, the world to many would be, as if it were without a fountain or a flower; it would in sooth be without a charm in life or a hope in death.

REMARKABLE RETICENCE.

One cannot study the book without discovering its remarkable reticence. It gives at once the impression of self-restraint, of conscious strength, of assured conviction, of absolute knowledge, and of great reserve power. It is practical in its purpose, and so its methods are distinctively and emphatically practical. It deals with the greatest subjects, and it soars to the loftiest heights. But it never for a moment loses its poise, never deserts its purpose, never hesitates in its onward sweep. The unity of its various parts in this regard is truly marvellous. Written during a period of nearly or quite seventeen centuries, written by men differing so completely in education, in social life, and in religious attainment, it is truly wonderful that it should so completely preserve one character. It

has a pervasive spirit, a unitive principle, and an accordant motive. Each man wrote with the utmost spontaneity, and yet all the writers were so controlled as to secure certain great ends, preserving unity in purpose with diversity of method. In this particular is clearly shown the superintending Spirit of God. Each writer wrote along his own lines, developing his own peculiarities, and yet the writings of all conduced to one great end. The purpose of the Bible is eminently practical, as opposed to what is merely theoretical or speculative. No writers of any other literature had so many temptations to indulge in speculative discussion as had the writers of the Bible; but they resolutely continue to impress practical and personal duties, and not to gratify mere curiosity. The Bible deals with the greatest of all conceivable subjects. It projects its lofty and solemn thought into eternity. It touches the deepest springs of human motives, and it appeals to the highest inspirations of human life. It has its times of solemn introspection, it has also its moments of holy prospection; it discusses the miseries of men and the mercies of God. But the practical element is never forgotten; it is always emphasized with much pathos and argument. The most exalted doctrine is solemnly presented in its close relation to daily duty.

These affirmations are finely illustrated in all which the Bible tells us of God, in His immaculate

holiness, in His infinite perfections, in His eternal existence. All these great truths are presented, not as subjects of speculation, but in their relation to the practical duties of life here and now. A similar remark applies with literality to all the revelations of heaven given in this blessed book. A door is occasionally opened in heaven to our wondering and admiring eyes, and the glory of the redeemed seems to stream through this open door. Strains from the unseen choirs beyond greet our listening ears. We often wish that the Bible had told us more of that land which is so far off and yet often seems so near. Why should the statements of the Bible regarding heaven be for the most part negative rather than positive? We may, however, be absolutely certain that there is as much of divine wisdom and love in the concealment as there would be in a fuller revealment. Why do we know so little regarding angelic beings? What is their nature? what their employments? Why does not the Bible gratify our speculative tendencies? The danger is that even the Church would neglect practical duty while it indulged in unwarranted speculations. The angels rebuked the disciples who saw Jesus ascend, because they stood gazing up into heaven, to the neglect of the testimony which longing hearts so much needed. A similar rebuke angels and preachers ought now to give to some Christians who neglect daily service for men while they

stand gazing up into heaven waiting for the return of the Lord. There is entire certainty that when the seal of silence is not broken in the Bible, the silence is not only silver but golden for all disciples of Christ.

THIS PRINCIPLE ILLUSTRATED.

The Bible is strangely silent regarding the place of the burial of Moses. We may well be sure that there was entire wisdom in the selection of the place of that august burial. Moses did not live for himself, but for his people. He was to see the goodly land, but was not himself to enter it. Marvellous is the charm which the Bible throws upon his last view of the goodly land from Mount Pisgah. Yonder, west of the Jordan, lay that land; but a more glorious land is soon to be the home of God's servant and Israel's leader. There in the land of Moab he died. Here in some ravine by Beth-Peor he was buried; "but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. Legend has supplied what revelation did not furnish; tradition has told of the tears of the people and the wailing of the children as they turned from the familiar scenes. It tells us how Moses died from the kiss of God. But regarding all these things the Bible is judiciously silent. No doubt undue reverence would have been given the grave of Moses had its location been definitely known.

The *New Testament* manifests a similar reticence in regard to Christ. We do not know with absolute certainty the day of the month, the month of the year, nor the year of the world in which Christ was born. Scholars in different ages and countries have selected almost every one of the days of the year as the day of His birth. It is almost certain that it was not the 25th of December, and it is quite certain that we are four or five years behind the proper year of His birth; so that this present year ought to be at least 1903 of the Christian era. There is a strong tendency in human nature toward giving undue honor to times and seasons. Religious festivals not appointed by God often receive a devotion denied God's holy day. There are many who would shrink back with horror from certain acts if committed on Good Friday, which they will commit on the Lord's day without the slightest compunction of conscience.

It is deeply interesting also to observe the reticence of the Bible regarding the youth of Christ. From the time that He appears in the temple at twelve years of age, to the time when He enters upon His public ministry at thirty, there is but one hint, one glimpse, one echo, concerning the eighteen years of lowly life, of patient service, and of holy discipleship in the obscure village of Nazareth. When we contrast the reticence of the inspired gospels in this regard with the garrulous trivialities found in the so-called Gospels of the Infancy,

we have a striking illustration of the superiority of the gospels as given by holy men inspired of God to write the history of Christ. One needs no stronger argument than the comparison between the genuine and the pseudo-gospels, as to the value of inspiration. In these pseudo-gospels we have prolonged accounts of the freaks of divine power which it is claimed Jesus manifested. We are told that He made mud images, spoke to them a word of power, and that they became living boys and girls. We are told that when engaged with Joseph the carpenter, His reputed father, in erecting houses, He touched with His hand beams that were too short, and they became of the required length. One turns away with disgust from the ridiculous descriptions contained in the gospels written by men uninspired of God. The profound silence falling upon this period of Christ's life rebukes by anticipation the tendency toward the practice of Mariolatry. There is not the slightest doubt but that in the Roman Church to-day the Virgin Mary often receives a degree of homage denied the Son of God. There is not one word in holy Scripture to justify such homage; and there are records of positive rebukes which Christ administered to His mother both before and after entering on His public ministry.

There is in the Bible a similar reticence regarding the personal appearance of Christ. Not one word is said as to His height, the color of His hair

and eyes, or as to any of His features. This absence is truly remarkable; it seems to set aside all the natural instincts of His devout followers and of His inspired evangelists. We know that nothing more interests average hearers or readers than accounts of the personal characteristics of leaders of thought, representatives of fashion, authors of movements, and founders of religion. Why is the Bible so strangely silent on all these topics? We are not to know Christ after the flesh; we are to know Him in a higher, a holier, and a diviner relation. Mr. Walters, in his little volume entitled "Claims of the Bible," quotes Mrs. Jameson and Lady Eastlake, who give this explanation of the silence of the evangelists regarding the personal appearance of Christ: "He whom all races were to call Brother, was not to be too closely associated with the particular lineaments of any one race. East and West, Byzantium and Rome, Spain, Italy, Germany, and every Christian nation might imagine the form of the Son of Man not altogether unaccordant with their respective ideas of beauty, dignity, and love." No doubt there is force in this explanation. Christ was to be the brother of every believer. He may be more to every woman now than He was to His own mother, except so far as she believed in Him as her Lord; and more to every man than He was to His own brothers, except so far as they believed in Him as their divine Saviour.

One is struck also by the remarkable reticence of the Bible regarding the mysterious experiences of Lazarus during the four days that he spent in the grave. Why was he thus silent? How the village folk would have gathered about him had he talked of the wonderful experiences through which he may have passed. He might have been the wonder of the entire country, calling attention to himself, rather than giving honor to his Lord. Tennyson, in his "In Memoriam," gives us a wonderful picture of how the neighbors met from house to house, how the streets were filled with joyful sound, how a solemn gladness crowned the purple brows of Olivet, as the people gazed upon a man raised up by Christ. But all else remains unrevealed; "something sealed the lips of that evangelist."

A similar illustration of the reticence and of the practicality of Biblical teaching is seen in the method of the apostles in discussing their own exalted experience, and in their treatment of profound doctrines. Nowhere outside the Bible can be found a nobler specimen of literature in the discussion of a great doctrine than the apostle Paul has given us in his teaching of the resurrection in 1 Cor. xv. This chapter will ever hold its place in the front rank of the divinest elements of inspired literature. We have here a connected, elaborate, and unanswerable argument for the doctrine of the resurrection—the very foundation-truth of Christianity.

We have here resistless logic, majestic rhetoric, and lofty emotion in rhythmical expression. This chapter is an oratorio of triumph. It is resplendent as a gleam of light from heaven; it is musical as a strain from angelic harps; it is rhetorically, musically, and spiritually inspiring and sublime. We have in this chapter inimitable beauty of thought, together with unequalled power of argument. But the apostle turns at once from sublime doctrine to practical duty. The chapter marries doctrine and duty. This glorious chapter closes with the words, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." There is thus evermore a practical application in all the apostle's greatest arguments. His discussion of his own wonderful visions and revelations from the Lord follows the same method of teaching. On this occasion he was in a condition of literal ecstasy, not knowing whether he was in the body or out of the body; he was as one caught up to the third heaven. Observe his remarkable and commendable reticence regarding these marvellous experiences. Put over against his sublime reticence the puerile loquacity of Mohammed when describing his pretended exaltation and divine revelation. No doubt Mohammed's epilepsy had not a little to do with his visions. No doubt he was at times moved with a rapturous vehemence

of emotion. No doubt his whole frame was violently swept with paroxysms during these experiences; and no doubt he even seemed to hear strange voices impelling him to noble services. But his garrulity reduces all to puerility compared with the noble silence, the majestic reticence of the apostle to the Gentiles. In all this apostle's allusions to paradise he makes it not a theme for personal discussion nor to gratify vain curiosity, but he mentions it only to commend his apostleship to those who called it in question. He used this exalted experience merely to advance the cause to which he had consecrated his life. He had not desired to attract attention to himself; but his whole purpose was to honor his Lord and Master and to advance the cause of truth among men.

Not otherwise was it with the apostle Peter, in the description which he gives of that great and awful time when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and when the Lord shall come as a thief in the night. There were abundant opportunities in these allusions for gratification of curiosity, speculation, and selfish ambition. We ask speculative questions to this hour regarding all these events. We cannot hold the thought of the people to practical duty when speculations of this character are rife in the community. But although the apostle Peter is discussing these tremendous events—events which have occupied the thought of modern science as well as spiritual theology—

he turns immediately from the majestic description which he has given, to the practical duty he desires to emphasize, saying: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (2 Peter iii. 11).

This method of teaching is never forgotten in any part of the New Testament. All contained in the Scripture has its practical uses. This statement is true even of the long genealogies which often excite the amusement of thoughtless readers of the New Testament. These genealogies established the family relationship of great historic characters; they also often proved the fulfilment of solemn and glorious prophecies. Probably no part of our body is meaningless; it has its place in the economy of our physical life and growth. Not otherwise is it with all parts of the Word of God. Let us learn the lesson in our Christian experience taught by this method of Biblical revelation. Let us rejoice that doctrines are the foundation of practice, and that all true doctrine should be incarnated in daily duty. Thus it will be seen that every part of God's Word is of immediate service in the development of the Christian life. Let us rejoice in all the revelations of God's holy book, and let us see also that, as in experience, in oratory, in authorship, often the strongest elements of character are seen in reticence rather than in expression, so the fullest proofs of revelation are

often to be seen in the silences rather than in the utterances of God. Christ dared to be silent in the presence of His foes; so the Bible often dares to be silent in the presence of its bitterest critics. It is still true, and will be true evermore, that while speech is often silvern, silence is often golden

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THE COMPASSIONATE SPIRIT OF THE
BIBLE.

VIII.

THE COMPASSIONATE SPIRIT OF THE BIBLE.

It has been suggested that if the Bible were entirely lost, all its parts could be rediscovered and reunited, because every verse has been quoted by writers whose works are accessible. The further suggestion has been made that if the Bible were lost, many of the greatest books, paintings, sculptures, and oratorios would be comparatively if not largely meaningless. It is probably true that every text and verse in the Bible has been quoted either in books of devotion or theology or in those of poetry and fiction. We have only to imagine for a moment that the entire book had utterly perished as a book, and its various texts from the different connections in which they are found; and it is easy to see how vast a portion of literature would thus be worthless. We cannot read even a few pages of any standard work without coming to some direct or indirect allusion to the holy Scriptures. If all knowledge of these Scriptures were utterly lost, many of the sweetest and sublimest passages of Shakespeare would be forceless if not entirely meaningless. A similar remark would apply to the noble strains of Milton, as he lifts us on the wings of literary genius and poetic inspira-

tion to the very throne of God. Many of the aphorisms of philosophers would become enigmas; many passages in Scott, Dickens, George Eliot, Browning, Tennyson, Lowell, and Longfellow would be obscure if not unmeaning. The fact is that the thought and speech of the Bible have wrought themselves into all literature, painting, sculpture, and music. We shall later see full illustrations of these truths as we study subsequent chapters in our inquiry concerning the Bible and literature.

But if the Bible were entirely lost, there would be a deeper loss to the world than that which was chiefly literary. A greater loss would be that of the compassionate spirit of which the Bible is the chief source. Creation and revelation are but expressions, manifestations, incarnations of God's loving thoughts to men. The whole earth was once a thought of God; the whole earth is now God's thought materialized. The stars are God's brilliant thoughts, the mountains His lofty thoughts, the flowers His beautiful thoughts; this creation speaks of God in a varied voice to every listening ear and loving heart. But even nature speaks in contradictory voices, at least according to our interpretation of those voices; sometimes it tells us of sunshine, of gentleness, and of love; but at other times it speaks of God's apparent wrath toward men. Nature crushes life in the avalanche and hurls men, animals, and all the works of men to

destruction in the cyclone; in like manner all forms of life are ruthlessly trodden down by the resistless power of the tornado. Nature alone can scarcely be called a message of God's love toward the creatures whom He has made in His own image. Doubtless if we could understand nature's deepest thought we should discover that it is truly the voice of love; but judging from its most apparent teaching, it is as often the voice of wrath as it is of love. We need then a fuller revelation of God in order to catch the tender tones of His fatherly heart. God's book of creation shows God's hand; God's book of revelation manifests God's heart. In this latter book His heart voices His deepest thoughts, so far as they can be received by finite creatures. In the Bible He is represented as pitying His children even as does an earthly father; and He is also described as comforting them even like a mother. All the tenderest relations of life are employed in the effort to express His incomprehensible love. The apostle Paul prays that we may know the love of Christ; in the next breath he affirms that such love entirely passeth human knowledge. In the Bible we feel the pulse-beat and hear the heart-throb of God. His voice is heard alike in promise and warning, and it is equally a voice of love, whatever tone, for the time, it assumes. The brakeman rushing down the track swinging his red lantern of warning to protect the approaching train from an open switch

or bridge performs an act of love in its deepest meaning. Not otherwise does the prophet or psalmist, the disciple or apostle speak in the Word of God, whether he pronounces God's solemn warnings against the sinner or His fearful admonitions against sin. The Bible offers pardon to the guilty, it promises profound peace to the troubled, it assures the sorrowing that joy will succeed grief, and it gives cleansing to the sinful and life to the dying and the dead.

The Bible addresses the children of men evermore as sinners. Its enforcement of God's law is stringent and apparently severe; and yet its compassions never fail in the case of all who are penitent. From patriarchal altars the voice of mercy sounded forth in tones of deepest tenderness and heavenly gentleness. Along the whole line of Christian revelation we see God manifesting the spirit of compassion, as men were able to receive that spirit. God was restricted simply because of man's incapacity to receive the fulness of His love and the completeness of His mercy.

THE SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

We have heard much in these latter days of the spirit of altruism. This term was coined, or at least was first employed, by the Positivists, or followers of the French philosopher Comte; it signifies devotion to others or to humanity as a whole, and is thus the opposite of selfishness. It is, if

one may so say, "otherism" as opposed to selfism. We have reason for profound gratitude that this spirit is in no small degree characteristic of the close of the nineteenth century. Many persons rejoice in the system of altruism who utterly deny the divine fountain whence it flows. But for the revelation of God in Christ and the record of that revelation in the Bible, the spirit of altruism as a characteristic of modern civilization would be simply impossible. There are many outside of the Church who oppose Christ and the Church, affirming that neither is necessary to the development of the noblest instincts of the race. Men occupying this position are like those who have climbed a tree by means of a ladder, and then despise the ladder while they enjoy the fruits of the tree. Such persons are utterly unhistorical, illogical, and unjust. Jesus Christ was the first great altruist the world ever knew; He is still the world's ideal altruist. He must ever so remain. He had no self-love. He knew Himself only as obedient to God and as ministrant to men. His life projected itself into every noble life, and His love inspires every brave, manly, and unselfish heart. It is as unjust in thought as it is untrue in fact to suppose that this altruistic spirit could be found in the world were it not for Christ, its great Author and Revealer. Socrates was said to have brought down philosophy from heaven to earth; but of Jesus Christ it may be said that He brings us up from

earth to heaven by the divine philosophy, the heavenly love, and the altruistic spirit which He illustrated in His own life, and which He imparts to those who have by personal experience entered into that life.

Akin to the altruism of which mention has been made, and as a fuller manifestation of its spirit, is the spirit of brotherhood which belongs to our day. The note of brotherhood gives sweet music to the oratorio of humanity as the century is nearing its close. But for the spirit of brotherhood America never would have championed the cause of Cuba. The war with Spain was a war between the sixteenth century and the twentieth century. It was a war between tyranny and liberty. It was a war between illiteracy, bigotry, and superstition on the one side, and intelligence, liberty, and religion on the other side. It was a war between the Inquisition of Torquemada and the Constitution of America. America rose in her might to defend the cause of the downtrodden. The nations of Europe could not understand how any nation could enter into war except for personal and selfish aggrandizement. As a consequence, the motives of the Americans were misinterpreted and their actions misconstrued. Their purpose was high and holy; their war was one of humanity, of compassion, of brotherhood.

America illustrated in some measure the compassionate spirit of Jesus Christ. The spirit of

Christ is incarnated in the Bible. Even in the Old Testament itself Judaism manifested a compassion far in advance of the heathenism by which it was surrounded. The Old Testament inculcated love to the stranger. When Christ taught His great precepts, He gave a manifestation of divine compassion such as the world previously had not conceived. His Golden Rule is fitted to revolutionize all society, to remodel all social relations, and largely to divinize humanity as a whole. The Golden Rule is the highest law of etiquette ever formulated and promulgated among men.

Christ's first sermon in the synagogue in Nazareth, where He was brought up, lays down principles as revolutionary in their application as they are divine in their origin. One cannot but regret that only a single sentence of that sermon is recorded on the pages of holy Scripture. That sentence is in these words, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." In that sermon we see that Christianity is a religion intended for the poor, that it is fitted to heal the broken-hearted, to give deliverance to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, comfort for the bruised, and hope for all classes and conditions of men. In Christ was fulfilled the golden prophecies of Isaiah made hundreds of years before. Every fiftieth year, under the old dispensation, liberty was proclaimed to all the people, forfeited estates were restored, and debts were cancelled. Christ's Gospel was the

philosophy, the spirit which He which He imparts experience entered

vention has been of its spirit, is belongs to our day. meet music to the ry is nearing its erhood America cause of Cuba. between the six- century. It was y. It was a war perstition on the y, and religion on ween the Inquisi- titution of Amer- ht to defend the nations of Europe ation could enter selfish aggrandize- e motives of the and their actions was high and holy; of compassion, of

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declaration of a spiritual jubilee; He offered eternal redemption, proclaiming forgiveness, liberty, and restoration. It is not surprising that all the people in the synagogue fixed their eyes upon Him. Well might they "wonder at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." These were words of peculiar sweetness, of pervasive power, and of divine beneficence. It is not too much to say that if the spirit of the text which He used on that occasion were incarnated in business, social, and church relations, the whole world would be revolutionized speedily. All the noblest principles of sociology as they are illustrated today by the most benevolent teachers and beneficent friends of the poor are found in these germinal words. Christ, in His compassionate spirit, put hope into the poor man's life. A king of France said that he would put a pair of chickens into every poor man's pot. Jesus Christ did more than make gifts to the poor. He recognized the poor man's manhood as well as the poor man's poverty. He was the poor man's best friend. The beads of sweat produced by honest toil stood upon His own brow. He was the only Man ever born into this world who had His choice as to how He should come. He might have come a full-grown man, as did the first Adam; He chose to come in all the weakness and helplessness of a babe. He might have come in all the splendor and pageantry of an earthly king; He chose to come in poverty, in

lowliness, in gentleness. It is difficult for us to realize what an element of power there is in this feature of His life in its relations to the poor in our day. He inserted Himself into the race at its lowest and weakest point. He is the Inspiration of every humble life, the Light in every lowly heart, and the Hope of humanity in all its various needs, longings, and aspirations.

HIS COMPASSIONATE ACTS.

To Christ we are indebted for the story of the Good Samaritan. His entire ministry was in the spirit of that narrative. He taught men to return blessing for cursing. His life was the incarnation of a selfless soul. Compared with Him, all other founders of religions, all other teachers of philosophy pale into shadows. We have only to think of His relations to the dead maid, the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, to realize the compassionateness of His spirit and the sympathy of His acts. See Him as with His disciples He approaches the gate of Nain! A funeral procession is leaving the village as Christ and His disciples arrive. The evangelist Luke paints the picture of the chief mourner with two suggestive touches of his inspired brush. This woman had followed a bier to the tomb on a former occasion. Doubtless she had expected to lean upon the strong arm of this son in her advancing years; and now he is taken from her. With one touch of the brush we

are taught that the dead man was "the only son of his mother," and with another dash of the brush the picture of her sorrow is complete as we are informed that "she was a widow." Mourning for an only son was proverbially bitter. The original words here show that this young man was not only the only son she then had, but the only one she ever had. No wonder we read of our Lord that "He had compassion on her." Great must have been her surprise when she heard the voice of a stranger addressing her in her grief. But as she looked up through her tears, she must have seen in His beautiful face indications of the love of His compassionate spirit. "Weep not," He adds. Such words spoken by the lips of earthly comforters are often meaningless; but they are now spoken by Him who shall one day wipe away all tears from all eyes. In a moment more His voice is heard saying, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise!" and it is then added, "He that was dead sat up and began to speak." How marvellous was that moment; how unspeakable the joy of that widowed mother; how compassionate the heart of this divine Redeemer!

Were we to follow Him to Bethany and to witness His kindness to Martha and Mary and His almightiness in calling Lazarus back from the grave to earth and life, we should again be impressed with the compassionateness of His divine-human spirit. To Him childhood ran with confi-

dence, affection, and devotion; to Him blindness rolled its sightless eyeballs when its quickened ear heard His approaching footsteps; before Him demoniacs came, and soon at His feet they were sitting clothed and in their right mind. In the woman who was a sinner the Pharisees saw only the sinner, but in the sinner who was still a woman the compassionate Christ saw chiefly the woman.

THE BIBLE AND THIS SPIRIT.

The Bible, which is the revelation of the salvation of Jesus Christ, is also a revelation of His compassionate spirit and methods. The Bible is the friend of the poor. Again and again it commands all God's people to remember the poor. It makes great and precious promises to those who are obedient in this regard; it utters severe rebukes toward those who forget the claims of God by forgetting their duty to their fellow-men. There can be no true brotherhood of man except as there is a true fatherhood of God. It is impossible for us rightly to love God whom we have not seen, except as we truly love our brother whom we have seen. God judges of our purpose toward Himself by our conduct toward those whom in His name we might help. Neglect of them is in some measure neglect of Him. The Bible has manifested this spirit in all its relations with every nation where its truths are loved and obeyed. To the spirit of this holy book, as it incarnates and

declares the spirit of its holy Author, are we indebted for the noblest forms of charity. Heathenism built but few almshouses, hospitals, orphanages, or charitable houses of any kind. One turns with pity and indignation to the cruelties manifested by heathen nations toward the aged and the poor. The cruelty of the Romans toward slaves almost surpasses belief and quite beggars description. Even Cicero apologizes for showing mercy to a slave of whom he was fond. We have only to pronounce the name of Domitius to be reminded that in the palmy days of Rome the life of a slave was more lightly esteemed than that of a favorite dog or other domestic animal. We have only to remember that an island in the Tiber was used as a home for the poor and the aged, where they were left to die by exposure to heat and cold or by starvation. The spirit of heathenism was harsh, cold, and utterly cruel. Christianity came as the breath of spring to a world that was thus old, cold, and cruel. With the coming of Christianity the flowers of love bloomed, and the deeds of kindness abounded. Christianity was a beautiful maiden, crushing with her gentle but firm foot every noxious plant, and casting with her loving hand into the waiting earth the seeds which soon grew into plants of kindness, beauty, and love. The spirit of the Bible necessitated to a very great degree a new terminology in the language of Greece and Rome. Although Greek is the most philosophically accu-

rate and in many respects the most beautiful of all languages, there was not in the entire vocabulary a word for love in its higher, holier, and diviner meaning. That word had to be created as the incarnation of the kindlier and heavenlier spirit which Christ introduced and which the Bible promulgated. Many words, both in Greek and Latin, took on new meanings in the atmosphere of compassion generated by Jesus and diffused by His Church. The new wine of this heavenly life burst the old linguistic bottles of Greece and Rome.

This new spirit builds our orphanages, hospitals, and almshouses to-day. It erects our schools, colleges, and other institutions of learning. It organizes our sheltering homes, our college settlements, and the manifold charities of the hour. When has infidelity ever endowed a college? When has infidelity erected an hospital? When has atheism founded great orphanages or other charitable institutions? A few such instances, it is claimed, can be named; but the number is very small, and when found it is discovered that for the most part these institutions were founded not because of, but in spite of, the atheistic element that had some place in the creed of the founder. The time has come when atheism should apologize for its inhumanity. It is cold and cruel, even as was heathenism. Atheism can change the rarest day in June into the rawest day in January. Atheism is a monstrosity in human thought and a gigantic

failure in human effort. The Bible is evermore the poor man's book. It is always and everywhere his consolation and inspiration. It opens to him at once the noblest possibility of a lofty manhood. It recognizes his manhood in his relations to his fellow-men, and his possible childhood in his relations to God. It has been well said that in this volume the poor man may walk at any time in the garden of Eden, enjoy the hospitality of Abraham, ascend the mount of God with Moses, and rejoice in his heirship with God through Jesus Christ. It was not on his "Principia," as Gilfillan has remarked, that Newton laid his dying head, but on his Bible; not on his "Task," but on his Testament, that Cowper found repose; not in his wide fame, but in his humble hope, that Robert Hall experienced peace; not on his limitless genius, but on the divine mercy, that Merdige rejoiced in the hour of death. This book like its divine Author, pours out its compassionate spirit, rejoicing the dark world with its supernal light and enkindling cold hearts with its heavenly warmth.

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THE PROGRESSIVE REVELATION OF
THE BIBLE.

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THE PROGRESSIVE REVELATION OF THE BIBLE.

ALL intelligent students of the Bible have discovered the great progress which it makes in its revelation of the truth of God to the minds of men. Were the Bible more carefully studied, it would be more tenderly loved as well as more fully understood. It is a thousand pities that to many otherwise intelligent men in the world, and to not a few even in the Church, it is a comparatively unknown book. Except as men study music, painting, sculpture, and poetry, how can they expect to be devoted disciples of any of these fascinating pursuits? The man who discovers the development of thought in the Bible which it clearly contains, experiences in studying its pages somewhat of the charm which an enthusiastic musician enjoys as he follows the diapason of a great oratorio. If only the members of all our churches could be stimulated to study the Word of God aright, the Bible would virtually become a new book in the experience of the Church. We open it at Genesis and read the sublime words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"; we close

it reading in Revelation, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." A period of from sixteen hundred to seventeen hundred years has intervened between the writing of these two sentences. Not fewer, probably, than forty writers were engaged in writing these and the intermediate portions of the book. These writers represented various grades of intellectual and spiritual attainment, and many variant positions in social life. Some of the writers were princes and some peasants; some were lovers of war and others lovers of peace; some were prophets and others were poets; but all stood in some sense with uncovered head in the immediate presence of God. He must be a very cursory reader indeed who does not discover the marvelous progress in the development of spiritual experience as seen in these different writers. One is almost overwhelmed with the thought of all that has occurred in the history of the human race between the writing of the first sentence and the closing invocation. Empires and republics rose and fell, philosophies flourished and decayed, armies fought and suffered defeat or rejoiced in triumph, and great nations appeared and perished while this majestic, immortal, and divine book was reaching its sublime conclusion. Truly the thought of all that intervened between these two sentences is wellnigh overwhelming. The first sentence is a simple and sublime statement of the great fact of God's creative power and unique per-

sonality; it is addressed to the earliest consciousness of man. It is a sentence which denies atheism, because it assumes the existence of God; it denies pantheism, because it affirms the personality of God; it denies materialism, because it declares the creative act of God. The sentence closing this great volume expresses the longing cry of the ennobled, exalted, and partially divinized creature for the fullest revelation of the august presence of Christ in the weary world and in the loving heart. This invocation for the return of the Lord Jesus was the appropriate expression of the desire of the aged John, suffering exile in a lonely island. It is appropriate for us also as we reach the close of the volume of revelation. It discloses somewhat of the glories of the heavenly world, and it comforts our hearts with the hope that the Lord Jesus will come quickly and gather His redeemed people to Himself. This cry of the apostle John was born of faith, and it expresses the exalted hope which results from the teaching of this progressive revelation.

RAPID PROGRESS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

There is, as we have seen, wonderful progress between these extremes; but that progress is much more rapid in the New Testament than in the Old. At times in the Old Testament the course is circuitous; occasionally we seem to go backward rather than forward. Eddies abound in the stream

of revelation. But there is still a stream flowing forward toward the ultimate issue of God's larger plans and diviner purposes. Bishop Butler says: "Men are impatient and are for precipitating things; but God appears deliberate throughout His operations, accomplishing His acts by slow steps. The change of the seasons, the ripening of the fruits of the earth, the very history of the flower, are instances of this." We need often to remind ourselves that one day with God is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. We become impatient of the slow movements of God, as we judge, regarding His methods. We must remember that God gives men truth as they are able to receive it. In the Bible it came to them at sundry times and in divers manners. It came in broken parts and in severed links; but in the fulness of time He enabled us to read the lesson He had long been teaching. There is progress from the beginning even to the end of the volume. When we reach the close of the Old Testament we are distinctly conscious that the light is growing brighter, the truth clearer, and the purpose of God plainer. Between the two Testaments there is a blank page—blank so far as the inspired record goes. But this period of four hundred years was one of great activity among the nations, and of corresponding progress in the development of the kingdom of God. We must not relegate God to a time and place remote from His people. He

is ever present; He is ever accomplishing His gigantic plans and His glorious purposes.

When we enter the New Testament we are conscious that we breathe a new atmosphere. The progress we are now making is extremely rapid. In the Old Testament we slowly step from century to century; in the New Testament we rapidly step from year to year and even from month to month. Marvellous is the progress we make from the cradle to the cross of Christ; marvellous also from Calvary to Olivet; still more marvellous from Pentecost to the close of the record. In the kingdom of nature we everywhere see processes of prolonged development, and then results rapidly matured. Forces of nature are long at work in God's great laboratory, while often but few outward tokens mark their presence. Then come the few warm days of spring; then buds open, blossoms appear, and winter quickly gives place to spring, and spring to summer. In the great movements in society, similar laws of progress have their manifestation. These also are illustrated by processes in nature. Snow gathers for many months, and sometimes for long years, piling itself up into great mountains; thus avalanches are prepared. Then the voice of tourist or guide may shake the air sufficiently to cause the accumulated snow to rush down the mountain-side in a resistless avalanche. So in great movements for political and social reform the crisis suddenly comes. Hidden forces rapidly

work, firmly combine, and finally move forward with swiftly accelerating speed and irresistible force.

World-shaping events occurred during our Lord's earthly life. Think of the progress in science and art during that general period in Greece! Think of the world-embracing ambitions of Rome as she sat on her seven hills and ruled the world! Think of the great forces at work on the hills and in the valleys of Britain, whose final outcome is the civilization of the great Empire and the American Republic! Few among the writers of the Roman Empire had any conception of what was occurring in the land of Palestine; but the leaven that was to leaven the world was then at work. The statesmen, publicists, warriors, and philosophers were ignorant of the presence of that heavenly and resistless leaven. But few followers, apparently, gathered about Christ during His public ministry; and yet that ministry has shaped human history ever since. It has controlled the foremost nations of the world. It has inspired the literature, the art, the music, and the commerce of all civilized nations.

When we study the books which follow the gospels, we make rapid progress in the development of the doctrine taught by Christ. Thus when we come to the Acts of the Apostles, we are in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. In the development of the kingdom of God as revealed in the

Word of God, we observe first especially the dispensation of God the Father, next that in a peculiar sense of God the Son, and then in an advanced degree that of God the Spirit. We must not, of course, suppose that either Person of the Trinity was absent during any stage in the development of the divine purpose in relation to man; and yet each period has its distinctive characteristics in the manifestation of Deity. The book of the Acts lies between the facts of the gospels and their development in the epistles. In this respect it stands related to the gospels somewhat as the book of Joshua does to the Pentateuch. In the Pentateuch we had the laws of Judaism; in the book of Joshua we have illustrations of the applications of those laws to life and duty. The Pentateuch and the gospels give respectively the youth of Judaism and of Christianity: Joshua and the Acts give the manhood of these systems. Through subordinate leaders, in the book of Joshua, Moses was still the real leader; through the apostles, in the Acts, Christ is still the real leader. The fulness of the doctrine was impossible until this stage of the results was reached. Mysterious statements in the gospels are explained and defined in the epistles. Suggestions in the gospels become practices in the epistles, facts become doctrines. Christ's work as described in the gospels comes to be fulfilled in the Acts and the epistles.

Before we reach the close of the Scriptures we

see that the inward, individual life of believers becomes the outward and organized kingdom of Christ which is in the book of Revelation a history of trial and triumph, and finally a destiny in glory. We see all along these stages that Christ is still the Head of the Church. There is no contradiction whatever between these various parts of the one divine book. Parts are related to one another as dawn is to morning, and morning to the meridian splendors of noon. Christ is still the Head of the Church. The later and larger doctrine is found in its germs in the words which Christ spoke when on the earth. It was necessary that Christ should die and rise from the dead before the doctrine of salvation in all its fulness could be proclaimed. They are unreasonable who expect to find the fulness of the doctrine of salvation in the gospels before the facts of salvation were accomplished in the life of Christ. Not until He was glorified was His life-work completed; and not until it was thus complete could the facts of His life be fully interpreted and practically applied.

FACTS MORE IN DETAIL.

Let us look more in detail at this general outline. There is not only progress from gospels to Acts, and Acts to epistles, and epistles to Revelation, but there is also progress from gospel to gospel. The gospels must logically as well as chronologically precede the epistles. We must

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of themselves. Their modest reticence and self-
abnegation are marvellous. They give us, without
preface and without comment, the plain narration
of that which they have seen and heard. In order
the better to fix our thoughts on the narration of
the facts and the portrait of the person of Christ
we have four gospels, and not one gospel. We
have the accounts of the manifestation of Christ
presented to us in four photographs taken from as
many different points of view. We have the one
Lord of Glory passing four times before us in this
ancient, simple, sublime, and heavenly narrative.
This fact is of immense value in enabling us to
get a true conception of the life and character of
the Lord Jesus. There is an enormous advantage
in the fourfold repetition of the wondrous story
of Christ's life and death. Thus again and again
we stand beside His cradle, and we follow Him
through His unique life. Again and again we
stand beside His cross. Again and again we gaze
into His empty sepulchre, and at last journey with
Him to the eastern declivity of the Mount of
Olives, and watch Him as He goes up to take His
place on His temporarily vacant throne. We need
to saturate our minds with the spirit of this four-
fold narrative.

But we need also to observe that there is progress from one gospel to another. Special principles of selection and arrangement are illustrated in each gospel. Out of the great mass of facts accessible to each evangelist he chose those most in harmony with the purpose for which he wrote the gospel which bears his name. Matthew regarded Him as the royal Law-giver, Mark as the mighty Worker, Luke as the Friend of Man, and John as the Son of God. In harmony with this dominant thought, Matthew traces the genealogical line back to Abraham; Mark introduces us at once to Christ amid all the activities of His marvellous life. His is the glowing narrative in which everywhere he represents Christ at work. In harmony with this lifelike narrative such words as "straightway," "forthwith," "immediately" appear with remarkable frequency. The portrait of the Saviour is one; the aspects which we are permitted to observe are four. Matthew, as we have seen, carries us back to Abraham, and shows us how the New Testament grows out of the Old Testament. Luke carries us back to Adam. But John sweeps past Abraham, past Adam, past all human relationships, and presents to us Christ as God. It is fitting that John should always be represented as astride an eagle, soaring aloft into the mysteries and glories of eternity, soaring into the immediate presence of the Eternal. Matthew gives us the gospel in its special relations to Judaism; and Mark and Luke

in its broader relations to the human race. Matthew's gospel is Israelitic; Mark's Gentilic; Luke's universal; John's Christian. In John's gospel we see Christianity entering into subtle controversies regarding the person of Christ. It is of the utmost value to us that one who stood so close to Jesus as did John should give us this profound dissertation which no other evangelist anywhere contradicts. This truth is assumed in the synoptic gospels; for they everywhere imply what the apostle John declares as to the divinity of Christ. The thought which earlier was in the germ John expands, ennobles, and glorifies.

But the teaching of Christ, even in the most advanced gospel, was not a finality. Even there are found suggestions of a fuller development. It is visibly progressive throughout the gospels; it is continuously progressive after the gospels. We cannot expect to find in the three earlier gospels definite assertions as to the real nature of our Lord's vicarious death; but John's gospel is fuller in that regard. But even here are great sayings whose complete meaning awaits the future of the plan of revelation. We shall see the wonderful progress in the development of the divine thought in the gospels if we simply compare the sublime Sermon on the Mount—the first discourse in Matthew—with the last discourse of Christ recorded in John. The Sermon on the Mount, at the opening of the ministry, was beautiful and sublime. It

was vastly in advance of the highest thought of the greatest teacher of Greece, of Rome, or of the dreamy Orient. It stands peerless above the world to this hour. But when we compare it with the discourse and prayer in the upper room, as found in the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth chapters of John's gospel, we see what progress has been made in spiritual development. In the Sermon on the Mount we are somewhat in the atmosphere of the Old Testament; in the later address we stand at the beginning of the New Dispensation. The light of heaven falls on our upturned faces; the peace of God is in our hearts; we stand in the unclouded splendor of Him who is the Son of Righteousness; heaven has opened; we are listening to the King of Glory; we are on the Olivet of revelation; we have anticipated the cry of John in the Apocalypse; indeed, the apocalyptic glory is already experienced.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

Still there is progress as we pass from the gospels to the Acts. The book of the Acts carries us back to the preceding record, as recorded by Luke in the gospel which bears his name. The record in that gospel was of what Jesus did on the earth; it was what Jesus "began both to do and to teach." In the book on which we have now entered we are to have a record of what Jesus "continued" to do after He was taken up into heaven. Christ's

authority is still recognized. He is still the Head of the Church. Strictly the title ought to be not the Acts of the Apostles, but the Acts of the Lord Jesus. It is still the personal action of the Master Himself. He has simply changed His standpoint. On critical occasions, even after His ascension, He is made manifest. The dying Stephen saw Him. Suddenly He appears to Saul of Tarsus. Unexpectedly He came to Paul in the temple. But a thin veil at any time separated Him from His waiting and worshipping disciples.

We cannot help also observing that there is great progress in the book of the Acts itself. The book begins at Jerusalem, the capital of the religious world; it ends in Rome, the capital of the Roman world. The dividing-line falls at the close of the twelfth chapter. We first had the Gospel within the bounds of Judaism; then beyond those limits pressing toward a parallelism with the Roman Empire, and then, finally, reaching out toward the whole race of man. It is profoundly instructive to study the progress in the development of the divine thought and purpose in this first history of the Christian Church. In the first division we had the movement from Jerusalem to Antioch, the field being chiefly the Jewish world, and the apostle Peter being the principal agent; in the second division the movement from Antioch to Rome; in this last division the field of operations is the Gentile world, and the principal agent is the apos-

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THE EPISTLES.

The Acts of the Apostles was so named because it is the record not of the words, but of the acts of the apostles. We cannot expect, therefore, to find in that book more than the intimations of doctrine; we cannot expect the exposition of doctrines to any degree. Thus this book carries us from the gospels to the epistles. It has well been likened to the span of a great bridge; its absence would produce an impassable chasm; it would involve us in inextricable confusion. Were we to pass at once from the close of the gospel by John to the opening of the epistle to the Romans, we should experience a painful shock. There would here be an impassable hiatus. We should be obliged to ask: "Who is this Paul who calls himself the servant of Jesus Christ? Whence came he? He was not mentioned among the witnesses of the resurrection. How came the gospel to the Romans?" We thus see at a glance how necessary is the Acts of the Apostles to the understanding of the epistles. Christ has been preached; churches have been formed. But what shall be done with those churches? Shall they be left to their own resources? The new intellectual and moral life must be fed. Now we see the facts of

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the gospels in a new light. The Holy Ghost has come. New standards of character are given; new principles of action are suggested; new bonds between man and man are recognized. Indeed, a new world is born. It is a critical time in the history of Christianity. The fate of the Gospel was in the balance. A further word of God is needed; a further word is furnished. God meets this necessity by the living voice and by the inspired writing of His holy apostles. These letters are the voice of the Spirit speaking to the Church. Christ Himself wrote no letters. So far as we know, He never personally wrote anything except a few words with His finger on the ground. But He writes as the voice of the Spirit speaks to the churches through these epistles. It must be borne in mind also that the epistolary form is a great advance in the New Testament over the oral communications of the Old Testament. The prophets delivered oracles; the apostles wrote letters. There was an immense advantage in the great argument of the epistles, the argument of justification by faith, and other profound discussions in the epistolary form of revelation.

The order of the epistles also is profoundly suggestive. Romans, Corinthians, Galatians — as Bernard, in his "Progress of Doctrine," has pointed out—were corrective in their nature. In these first epistles the apostolic doctrine is asserted in its divine character. In the epistles to the Ephe-

sians and Colossians a calmer spirit is manifested; here we have not so much confutation as consolation. In the epistle to the Philippians the voice is that of a loving friend. In the Thessalonian epistles we have the completion of Paul's addresses to the several churches. Although these last are earlier in date, they are placed later because of their teaching regarding the sustaining hope of the Christian in the glorious appearance of Christ. Then follow properly the pastoral and the general epistles. There is thus progress of doctrine throughout.

THE APOCALYPSE.

In the earlier Scriptures we have seen Christ in relation to individual souls and to churches. The Church had its fierce conflicts. As the epistles closed we had hints of anti-Christ, of lawlessness, and of manifold evils. The opening of the Apocalypse strikes the note of all which is to follow; it gives praise and glory to Jesus Christ as the Lamb that was slain. The book tells of the coming of the Lord Jesus. It gives us a doctrine of victory, and this victory means the overthrow of evil. Then come the new heavens and the new earth, then the glorious vision of the city of God. The word *city* suggests a well-ordered and protected society. The ideal social life is restored; and here is the final vision of the heavenly Jerusalem. Here is the culmination of all the revelations of

God from Genesis to this moment. Take this glorious vision away, and what a loss would we sustain! God dwells with men. In that perfect society all the people are righteous. Their love never fails. The city is the final home of the redeemed. We are not to think simply of our individual portion, else we lose the completeness of the blessing for the Church. The sublime words assure us of corporate blessedness where "He hath prepared for them a city."

Thus in the New Testament we come from the cradle of Bethlehem to the city of God. First we have a person; then facts; then in the Acts Christ is preached and churches are formed; then the apostolic letters expound the duties of men in their new relations; and in Revelation we find ourselves the partakers of a corporate life. We are citizens of a holy city, in which Christ finds His joy, and in which the ideal has become the actual. Thus the progressive idea of "the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" carries us from the cradle of Bethlehem to the city of God. We go, in both, from Eden to Paradise; from God walking with men in their innocence to men dwelling with God, their innocence restored by His forgiving grace.

If we were to call attention to special doctrines, we should see how the early parts of the Bible anticipate the later. There is no contradiction between the Old Testament and the New. August-

tine finely said: "The New Testament is latent in the Old; the Old Testament is patent in the New." The Old Testament is the bud, the New Testament the flower. Each part is perfect for its time and place. The existing Constitution of Great Britain is the natural outgrowth of the earliest institutions of that kingdom. The American Constitution stands related to the British Constitution as flower to bud and as bud to seed. The doctrine of the Trinity is suggested in the very dawn of human history in the words, "Let us make man in our image," but the full development is found in the apostolic epistles. Human redemption was suggested with the promise that God would put enmity between the serpent and the seed of the woman; it reached its meridian glory in its complete preparation when Christ hung upon the cross, and its presentation when the apostles preached on the day of Pentecost.

The history of both Testaments ought to be the history of every human soul. Our life must have its period of law, of gospel, of acts of apostles, and of apocalyptic vision of glory; and to our cry, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," is the promise that He will dwell with us, while the voices of saints and seraphs shall rise like that of many waters and mighty thunderings, saying: "Allelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

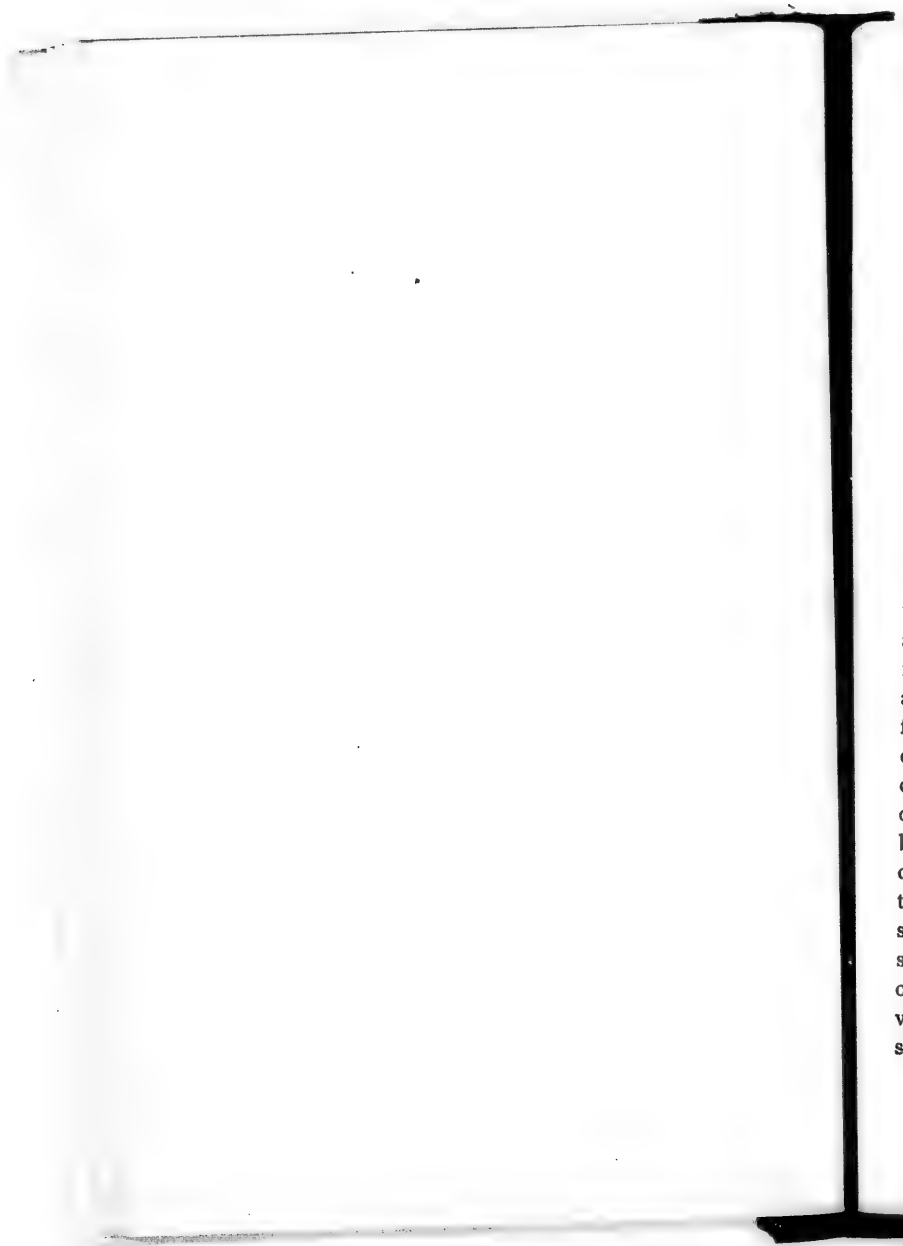
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THE ARTLESS HARMONY OF THE
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X.

THE ARTLESS HARMONY OF THE BIBLE.

No other book touches life at so many points as does the Bible. Though written in a country which was of small dimensions, yet it is a country which has a remarkable variety of climate and of production. In this respect Palestine is virtually the world in miniature. Only those who have given special attention to the subject are aware of the remarkable differences in climate and productions in parts of the country separated from one another by only a few miles. The traveller in going from Jerusalem to Jericho, a distance of only about eighteen miles, may really occasionally pass from winter to summer, and at all times from a comparatively temperate to a virtually tropical climate. In January, 1884, there were snow-drifts five feet deep at the Jaffa gate of Jerusalem, but at the same time there was a mild and tropical climate in the Jordan valley. Sir J. W. Dawson tells us that he has passed in February from rain, sleet, and cold winds at Jerusalem to a warm and sultry temperature at Jericho. This is a feature of Palestine to which it owes its remarkably great variety of animals and plants for a country of its size. Another reason for the great variety of pro-

ductions and animals and birds is that the country lies in the route from Asia and Europe into Africa. Migratory birds cross Palestine annually twice, in autumn and in spring. Doubtless a much more ample connection once existed between Asia and Africa than is seen at present. This fact is proved by the deposits in the Isthmus of Suez and in the desert east of it. There is also a marked diversity of climate, soil, and production between the hills and valleys of Palestine and this diversity always must have exercised an influence on the habits and pursuits of the people. The people of adjacent districts thus show as marked differences in their endurance and character as they do in their clothing, shelter, and various domestic habits and pursuits.

These facts show that Palestine was specially fitted as the birthplace both of the Bible and of Judaism and of Christianity. The Bible is a book intended for all countries and for all centuries. It has as great adaptability to the icy mountains of Greenland as to the coral strands of India. Its references to animals and to the various aspects of nature adapt it as well to America as to Europe or Asia. In this respect Palestine is unique among all the countries of the world, especially for a country of its small size, and it was divinely appointed as the birthplace of great religions and of God's fullest revelation to men. Thus the writers of the Bible had the appropriate local setting for writing

a book which was intended to cover a vast field and to describe widely different subjects; and thus it comes to pass that the Bible is perfectly at home at all times and in all lands. It is the contemporary of all religions; it is the exponent of the highest civilization of every age; and it is the inspiration toward the development of the divinest character of which human nature, under divine grace, is capable. The Bible, like its Lord, whom it reveals and honors, belongs to all races, ages, and countries.

ABSENCE OF SYSTEM.

There is a notable absence of systematic arrangement in the contents of this remarkable book. It has disclosed God, with all the mystery of His undefined and undefinable existence; but it nowhere attempts to prove the existence of God. A revelation necessarily assumes the existence of the revelator. It opens with the majestic words implying His existence and declaring His personality and power. When it speaks of God it never gives an opinion, it never speculates; it always in simple but majestic language declares His existence, and implies His creative power, administrative wisdom, and ineffable love. In this respect the Bible is markedly different from the productions of all merely human philosophic and religious teachers. The majestic sweep of the first chapter of Genesis proves by its uniqueness the great gulf which sepa-

rates this book from all the volumes of uninspired men. No human philosopher with a few bold strokes of his pen could give such a magnificent account of creation.

The book also discusses great questions regarding angels and other superhuman existences. It brings before us the being, the character, and the offices of these exalted creatures in a manner suggesting its peculiar inspiration and divine wisdom. It tells us of the origin, the duty, and the destiny of man. It avoids all mere speculative discussion regarding all these profound subjects; and it evermore presses home the practical duties and spiritual relations which belong to man, alike in his earthly environment and in his heavenly possibility. It gives illustrations of the unfoldments of God's mighty plans in the government of the world. It carries us from the eternal past to the eternal future; it shows us that time is but a hyphen between the eternities. It draws aside the veil and reveals the open door into heaven, and it also graciously uncovers to our shuddering gaze the pit of Hades. It rises into loftiest eloquence as it chants the song of the unspeakable love of God in the redemption of man. It shows us God's redemptive love even at the gate of Eden, and it manifests that love in its meridian splendor on Calvary. The infinitely great and the infinitely small meet on its divine pages. We behold the august Creator enthroned on the circle of the universe; but

just when we might be too much awed to give Him love or true reverence, we learn that He is as loving as He is mighty; that while He listens to the music of the spheres as they roll in their mighty orbits obedient to His command, He notices the sparrow's fall and rejoices in the bloom and perfume of the rose.

Family as well as national life is portrayed on its pages. The Bible, like Palestine, is the world in miniature. It surpasses all other books in this regard. It gives us the best pictures of all civilizations, all countries, all centuries. It is not too much to say that it is in the most emphatic sense the book of mankind.

The writers of this volume are numerous and varied. There are probably not fewer than forty writers whose inspired and consecrated labors appear on its pages. They represent all the walks of life, many varieties of moral character, and many varying degrees of culture. They cover, as has already been noticed, a period of between sixteen and seventeen hundred years in length. Some of these writers possessed abundant educational advantages; others were greatly limited in this regard. Some were statesmen rejoicing in international influence and power; others were peasants and herdsmen, not known outside the narrow circle in which they moved in their lowly employments. Some were warriors who rejoiced in the clash of arms and in all the pomp and pageantry of war;

others were lovers of peace, and were engaged as fishermen and husbandmen in the pursuits of rural life. Some were prophets, apostles, priests, and kings; others had no title, and would be utterly unknown to the world did not their names appear on these pages. Some portions of the Bible are addressed to Jews, others to Gentiles, bond and free, Greek and barbarian. Some lived amid the noise, confusion, and cosmopolitanism of ancient cities; others dwelt amid the idyllic charms of simplest and commonest life. Some were professional men; others were keepers of vineyards or tillers of the soil. It thus comes to pass that princes and peasants meet on these pages in a common fellowship, and unite their labors for a common and inspired end.

VARIETY IN DISCUSSIONS.

These writers wrote thus in a great variety of circumstances and with a corresponding variety of subjects. Their differing condition grew out of their varied positions and occupations. Thus some wrote in times of great national prosperity; others in times of defeat, captivity, and slavery. These writers differed very much in nationality and very much in methods of thought, figures of speech, and other forms of expression. Some parts of the Bible were written on the tented field; others in kings' palaces; some parts in prison and in exile; others in peace and prosperity. Some

voices echoed in the wilderness, and some from dark and loathsome dens and caves of the earth; others sounded forth with every opportunity and privilege of national peace and personal prosperity. Some writers wrote to the music of stormy wave and howling wilderness; others in the midst of smiling fields and national enthusiasm and inspiration. Thus each writer contributed his part to the imagery employed, the thought unfolded, and the truth declared. Some writings are very short; others are long histories, tracing the development of the divine plan in its manifold relations to human sin and sorrow. Failure and success, triumph and defeat, through long years, meet and mingle on the pages of the Bible story. Occasionally we have a full-length portrait of the life and character of some great actor in these ancient times and remote lands; again we have simply a few dashes of the brush, giving but faint outline of men who appeared but a moment and then disappeared into the darkness of a remote past and into the shadows of a mysterious story.

Now and then a great character like Melchisedek seems magically to stand before the reader; then he disappears for centuries; then with dim outlines shows himself again in his heroic personality; and finally retreats forever into the shadows. Some writers draw aside the historic veil of the remote past; others lift to our wondering eyes the curtain of the distant future. Some are concerned with

the long descriptions of ceremonial observances; others with exhortations to duties which seem to be more pressingly important and to be immediately present. Some rise on the wings of faith and hope to marvellous heights of poetic beauty and religious sublimity; others are closely logical, argumentative, and didactic. Tender appeal, loving exhortation, solemn warning, hearty commendation, and wholesome rebukes are found in close relationship on the pages of this remarkable volume.

Thus it comes to pass that we have a great variety in the contents of the book. We have sententious proverb, glowing lyric, and immortal drama. With the exception of the stately epic, almost every kind of literature is found on its pages. The fable of secular literature becomes the parable of inspiration; the ode is transformed into the psalm, the oracle into the prophecy; and histories of this world are exalted into histories of the kingdom of God. Archbishop Trench has reminded us that tragedy is not wanting, for though we have no *Œdipus*, we have the man of Uz, and for the "tale of Troy divine" we have the story of the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. Doubtless all these elements of literature were necessary to the perfection of this volume as a revelation from God. This book was to be the leaven that should leaven all literature; it was the instrument which should

strengthen all literary minds and hearts. The Spirit of God thus sanctified the various forms of literature which should make their appeal to the different elements in our composite nature.

There is also great variety in the contents of this book. We have the history of the creation of all races, nations, and men. We have an account of differing institutions, and national or universal ordinances. We have laws for life in its relation to God and man; we have revelations of God teaching the manifold concerns of His grace; we have prophecies that in the historic record have their fulfilment; we have God speaking now by the audible voice, and now in dreams and visions; and we also have revelation by signs and symbols. There are also great differences in the clearness with which God's will is made known. The whole stream of revelation tends toward one point, the direction differing as the truths revealed differ; but they all unite in revealing the glory of Jesus Christ as God manifest in the flesh. We might expect great reserve on the part of God in making revelations of Himself. Mysteries in revelation are clearly the unavoidable condition of any revelation of the infinite God to finite man. Wherever the infinite and the finite meet, insoluble problems necessarily emerge. These difficulties belong to our human condition. They have also their practical advantages; they encourage diligence; they develop humility; they secure reverence.

All revelation implies obvelation. The infinite God cannot fully reveal Himself to finite man. Did God draw aside the veil, the light would blind us by its brightness, and the vision would awe us by its heavenly splendor. Thus revelation is possible only as it is accompanied by obvelation. Thus we have in the Bible passages supernal in their light and beauty; others calm, pacific, and majestic. We have strong meat for robust men, and we have sincere milk for growing babes. We have streams in which leviathan can swim, and, as has been said, shoals in which lambs can wade. The Scripture pages, like the leaves of the tree of life, bear twelve manner of fruits. Jesus Christ is the glorious Unifier of this blessed revelation; in Him its blended glories meet, and on His brow it places its many crowns.

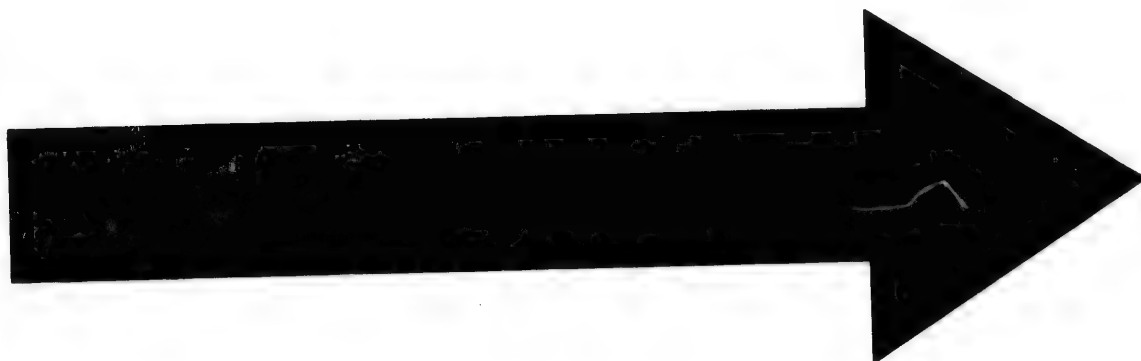
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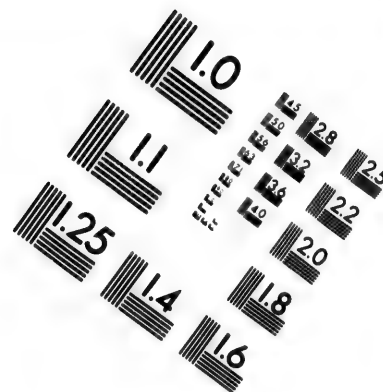
All these varieties appear, as we have seen, in the Bible, but without system. Some men seem to find fault with the Bible because it is not systematic in its arrangement of topics as is a dictionary or an encyclopædia. They want a Bible whose contents are classified alphabetically or topically. This is an utterly senseless demand. We shall look in vain in the Bible for a system of theology, in vain for a formal creed, in vain for articles of faith. There is no code of laws for the government of conduct, as we understand these

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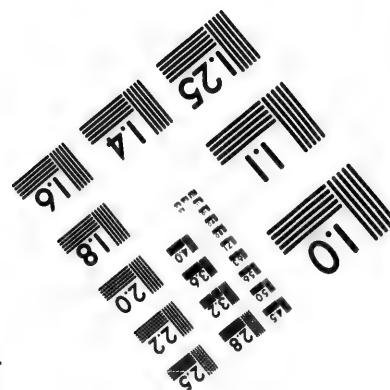
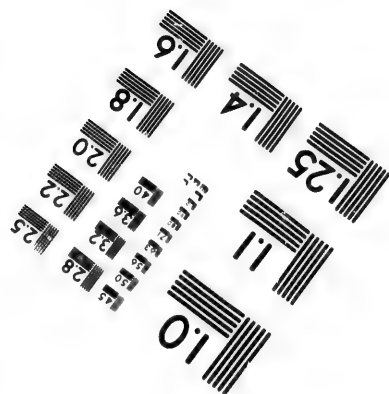
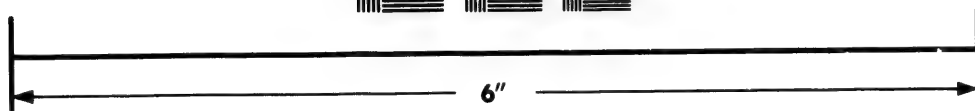
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terms, within the lids of the Bible. There are no minute directions for conduct, creed, or worship. There are no cards of etiquette, as once they were issued, and to some degree still are, at many European and other courts. We have in the Bible great laws, broad principles, profound truths. Christ's twofold law, supreme love to God and equal love to man, touches life at every point. It meets the pastor and his people, the physician and his patient, the lawyer and his client. God's two books of creation and revelation are alike in this respect; we do not expect classification, system, order, in woods or fields, nor in the broad pages of the Bible. Just in proportion as we find these we suspect the presence of art, the work of man's device, and not the free play of nature. Certain products, such as coal, iron, water, wood, and grass, are found in all parts of the world. But we do not find botanical gardens in nature; we do find plants growing, flowers blooming, and trees budding and blossoming. But all these developments of nature are in charming confusion. Geological cabinets we do not expect to find in nature's rocks; cabinets of fossils we do expect to find in classifications made by man. Herbariums are good and useful, and at times absolutely necessary; but the lover of flowers who wishes to rejoice in their delicate perfume, even though he be a herbarian, prefers fields and gardens to collections of dried plants, however systematically they may be ar-

ranged. There is in nature an orderly disorder, an unsystematic system, an utter absence of scientific classification.

• Method is truly divine; system is merely human. For systems of doctrine we go to the Nicene and Athanasian creeds or to the Westminster Confession of Faith. Here we get systems sometimes dry as dust and cold as ice. Here our thinking is all done for us. Here is the procrustean theological bed. Here the theological theory is the Procrustes which tortures its theological neophytes by stretching or lopping off their legs to suit the length of the doctrinal bed. There is but little room for spiritual vitality in some of the theological systems; there is, however, great use for intellectual inanity and theological vacuity. Cemeteries are admirable places for placidity, uniformity, and recumbency; but true vitality prefers the variety of nature and of the Bible, to the creeds made by men, often conspicuously narrow, and occasionally warped and dwarfed by the harshness of theological systems.

There are times, doubtless, when we should formulate our knowledge of the Bible into clear and definite statement; and the truths of the Bible admit of such formulation. But the Bible itself is ever in advance of such statements. It has an elasticity, a vitality, and a resiliency never found in man-made creeds. Doubtless there are times when we ought to formulate our knowledge of

ornithology, geology, botany, and other sciences; but such formulations are poor substitutes for the song of the birds, the testimony of the rocks, and the perfume of flowers. Method is one thing; system is quite another. System belongs to cabinets, arboretums, and cemeteries; method belongs to fields, flowers, and groves. Method is of God; system is of man. Nature is God's great unwritten Bible; revelation is God's great written Bible. Method marks both; absence of system is characteristic of both. Neither can ever be exhausted. Both would be exhausted were they artificially arranged, technically classified, and minutely labelled. It has been said that the Bible is "a wilderness, as some choose to call it, but a wilderness of sweets, with its flowers upon their stalks, its plants freshly growing, the dew upon their leaves, the mould about their roots, with its lowly hyssops and its lofty cedars of God."

Creeds necessarily are dry, partial, lifeless; often they are mischievous, misrepresenting or concealing truth. Almost invariably and unavoidably they are compromises. Occasionally they are unsightly scaffolds erected by men around the temple of celestial truth. Elaborate creeds sometimes lead men to neglect the Word of God. As a result, many Christians make more of the prayer-book compiled by men than they do of the Word of the living God. God has presented truth to us occasionally with sufficient reserve to stimulate patient

inquiry, to encourage prayerful research, and to reward consecrated acquisition. Let us ever earnestly study the blessed pages of this Word of God, and our knowledge shall be progressive, but never exhaustive. No man can ever fathom the depths of its profundity or scale the heights of its loftiness. Well has Henry Ward Beecher said: "Its truths are like gold in the soil; whole generations walk over it and know not what treasures are hidden beneath. So centuries of men pass over the Scriptures and know not what riches lie under the feet of their interpreters. Sometimes when they discover them, they call them new truths. One might as well call gold newly dug up new gold." These are wise words. The Bible, like the sky or the ocean, or like nature as a whole, is ever new, fresh, and beautiful. It arouses the unabated interest of childhood; it commands the admiration of youthhood, and it fills manhood and womanhood with satisfaction, joy, and peace. No other book bears re-perusal as does the blessed Bible. It meets the demand of every generation. It is in very truth, as the apostle Peter affirms, "the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." Well may we pray with George Herbert:

"Oh, that I knew how all Thy lights combine,
And the configurations of their glory!
Seeing not only how each verse doth shine,
But all the constellations of the story."

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THE REMARKABLE UNITY OF THE BIBLE.

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THE REMARKABLE UNITY OF THE BIBLE.

THE Bible will well reward the most patient study of the most careful student. New beauties constantly appear upon its sacred pages. The more scholarly and devout are its students, the more beautiful and blessed do its truths become. Its great object, as we have already seen, is to make men wise unto salvation. The science of salvation is the most august science ever pursued by human inquirer; the science of salvation is the loftiest and holiest achievement of human endeavor. God cannot indeed be fully known. We now see Him and all spiritual things through a glass darkly. We now know Him, not as He is, but as we are. We cannot now comprehend, but we can in part apprehend God. God has graciously made known His will through the instrumentality of His Word. He might have accomplished this result through the medium of the Bible, even though it were a far less attractive book than He has chosen to make it. The beauty of His word is one of its chief glories. No one can ponder its pages without being attracted by their peculiar fascination. The Bible is supreme among all the books of the world.

It is the oracle of oracles; it is the light of light. It has depths which the most gigantic intellect cannot explore, and it has shallows in which the lowliest disciple can joyfully wade. The charms of music, poetry, painting, and sculpture have exercised their most loving ministry in illustration of the truths contained in the Bible, but they have not yet told all which these truths contain, nor revealed all the love of which these truths are a faint expression.

The Bible thus possesses many of the most laudable characteristics of the noblest literature. It, as already remarked, as the revealed Word, is as much superior to the words of uninspired men, as Christ, as the incarnate Word, is superior to all the sons of Adam. Pollok has not exaggerated the beauty and power of the Bible in these striking lines:

" This book, this holy book, on every line
Marked with the seal of high divinity,
On every leaf bedewed with drops of love
Divine, and with th' eternal heraldry
And signature of God Almighty stamped,
From first to last,—this ray of sacred light,
This lamp from off the everlasting throne,
Mercy took down, and in the night of times
Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow
And evermore beseeching men with tears
And earnest sighs, to hear, believe, and live."

But while in the Bible a vast variety of subjects is discussed, as we have already discovered in these

lectures, there is one dominant thought pervading the inspired record from Genesis to Revelation. That thought is worthy of our careful consideration; that thought is the glorious diapason, the concordant, unitive, pervasive, and controlling note of the entire volume. While the book lacks systematic arrangement, it possesses a genuine and a discoverable organic unity. All great compositions possess this characteristic in a more or less marked degree. Some writers designedly veil their controlling purpose, believing that if it were conspicuous it would detract somewhat from the charm of the volume. But whether or not writers conceal the method by which they attain to unity of thought and purpose, the unity must be there or the book will be greatly lessened in its value. Sometimes the concealment of the purpose of the volume may all the more conduce to the attainment of the end sought. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" could not conceal its dominant design; perhaps the conspicuity of the design is greater by its being wrapped up in a thrilling story than if it were didactically declared. That volume is the epoch-making book of the last half century. Careful consideration of the literature of the period, on both sides of the Atlantic, will not modify but will confirm this statement. That book coined bullets, made cannons boom, rifles crack, and swords flash. It directed forensic eloquence, modified judicial decisions, and influenced international relations.

That book precipitated public thought and changed the destiny of millions. It may not always have been correct in its descriptions, not always accurate in its judgments, not always wise in its assignment of motives; but it had a definite purpose; it never lost sight of its *raison d'être*; it moved constantly and irresistibly toward its goal; and it sublimely accomplished its great purpose. The chains of bondage were struck from four millions of slaves, and a woman's pen stabbed the monster slavery to the heart. There was a superb literary unity and a sublime moral unity in the book from beginning to end. This unity was never forgotten, whether its descriptions were poetic or denunciatory, laughable or lachrymal, or whether the conduct it depicted were satanic or angelic.

All really great books must possess this characteristic. The stream of thought must flow like a river. It will now deepen and now broaden, it will now have its eddies in which the stream will for a time go in a direction opposite to its usual trend; but the waters and the eddies will soon be carried into the main current, and will thus sweep forward in one direction. Every great speech, such as that of Burke in his impeachment of Lord Hastings, or of Webster in his reply to Hayne, must be characterized by unity of thought and language. The greatest works comply with this essential law of making a powerful impact on the mind of reader or hearer. Any marked violation

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of this law will rob any work, whether it be rhetorical, musical, or artistic, of no small element of the power which otherwise it would possess. There must be concentration if there is to be powerful impression. Adam Smith, spending ten years on the "Wealth of Nations," Gibbon giving twenty years to his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Webster spending thirty-six years on his dictionary, and Bancroft twenty-six years on his "History of the United States" are illustrations of the value of unity of purpose, concentration of aim, and continuity of effort. One important element of genius is intensity; indeed, genius may be defined as willingness and ability to do tremendously hard work. The man with one talent concentrated upon a definite object will soon accomplish more than the man with ten talents scattering his energies in a variety of directions. Scientists tell us that if the power of the sun scattered over an acre of ground should be concentrated upon a given spot, its power would be well-nigh incalculable. There must be, in order to success in any department of life's endeavor, unity of purpose and definiteness of aim. A small amount of powder concentrated into a cannon will accomplish more than many barrels of powder exploded in an acre lot. Not otherwise is it in moral and spiritual endeavors. The apostle Paul taught us a great lesson when he said: "This one thing I do." The man who follows his example, even though his talent be

comparatively little, will not fail of commendable success in life. There should be in every life-history one pervasive, unitive, and dominant thought. There should be in every oratorio a discoverable diapason. A man who is sufficiently skilled in music, standing by Niagara Falls and listening to the roar of its thundering waters, could write the score of the song which these waters sing. Possessed of similar talent, a man standing opposite a rippling, glancing, singing brook could also write the score of its melodious and soothing song. The thundering fall and the singing brook each has its diapason. Not otherwise is it in every true life, in every great book, in every truly artistic painting, noble sculpture, or worthy work of any sort.

With this thought in mind we may examine for its fuller illustration Milton's "Paradise Lost," any of Shakespeare's plays, Tennyson's poems, or any works of modern or ancient times, in prose or in poetry. Some writers may partially conceal the unity of their work, and some students may not be skilful in discovering this unity even when it is present. But it can be recognized in any work of man possessing elements of worth and destined long to survive. This unity is clearly seen in the Bible. We have here a collection of books which, to the superficial observer, are not linked together by any unitive thought. These writings represent many centuries, many writers, many civilizations. We have here histories ancient and comparatively

modern, biographies long and intricate, and others extremely short and apparently of only passing interest, prophecies glowing with rhetoric, throbbing with patriotism, and joyous in hope, or sobbing in grief; lyrics possessing in marked degree the highest qualities of this most persuasive and stimulating literature; a great poem, abounding in examples both of drama and tragedy; and yet all pervaded by a unitive purpose, and all tending toward a definite end. We might well ask in the presence of the library which we call the Bible, with its almost unrivalled diversity of thought, writers, subjects, styles, and centuries, whether any degree of unity was possible in the midst of such a variety. Some critics are perhaps ready to say that the Bible is simply a jumble of history, legend, speculation, and superstition. Is there one dominant thought in this volume? Does it possess a pervasive spirit? Is there one superintending, controlling, and supreme mind found in this volume? There is no hesitation in answering all these questions with an earnest affirmative. Each book is animated by the same spirit; each forms an essential part of the whole. The great diversity in the books of the Bible is not only consistent with its perfect unity, but, properly understood, is a necessary part of that unity.

OTHER EXAMPLES OF UNITY.

No true student of nature will deny the unity of this material world. As he studies the great book of nature, whether its leaves be rocks, flowers meadows, butterflies' wings, the changing sky, or the composite nature of man, he will find unity pervading this vast book of nature. He will recognize its deep mysteries and its occasionally apparent contradictions. He will see that its record in creation is written in the language of fire and storm, and sometimes in the rending earthquake. But this glorious book has its prophecies, its poems, and its psalters, and its divine thoughts written in geology, astronomy, chemistry, and biology. Its subjects are many, but when all are understood it will be seen to be one story of creation, one history of providence, one song of humanity and divinity. All true scientific students know that many subjects in physical sciences which were once thought to be entirely distinct are now seen as tending to coalesce. The natural forces of light, heat, and electricity show their inherent unity. Not otherwise is it in the domain of animals and plants. Indeed, text-books have been prepared, as Principal Dawson has reminded us, to teach the unity of relationship between apparently distinct sciences. The name *physiography* has been given to this new science which already has proved its value to the broad scientific student.

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All great scientists see instantly and constantly
 the law of unity in diversity in their various de-
 partments of inquiry. This unity in diversity the
 Bible long ago beautifully illustrated. Scientists
 are now slowly discovering what the Bible long
 ago fully and powerfully declared. The more the
 Bible is studied in all its parts, the more conspic-
 uously will it be seen that its structure is not me-
 chanical but organic; that it is not put together
 like a human machine, but is organized and devel-
 oped as is the human body. There is similar unity
 in the human body. This fact inspired writers
 employ to illustrate the unity of the Church. We
 have legs, arms, feet, hands, eyes, mouth, fingers,
 toes, bones, muscles, tissues, and skin; and yet all
 of these are but members of one body. In like
 manner the Bible is but one book, though made
 up of many parts; and each part is animated by
 the principle which pervades the whole. From
 Genesis to Revelation there is a steady progress
 of spiritual truth in the development of God's
 great purposes toward man.

Similar unity is seen in many great buildings.
 They have their foundation, their walls, their roof,
 but all these separate parts constitute but one
 building. Many great buildings represent the
 thought of different architects in different centu-
 ries. The expert can discover the architecture
 of the classical period, of the Norman, the early
 English, and the later periods. Warwick Castle

as it is seen from the exterior is but a jumble of the styles of many men in many centuries. But within there is seen to be a perfect unity in design and in execution. Not otherwise is it in the Bible. It is made up of many streams, but all belong to one mighty river, flowing from the throne of God. All these streams unite in the one great river of salvation, and thus flow forward to the ocean of eternity. This unity in the Bible is as marked as that of the seed dropped into the ground. The whole Word of God is in germ in the book of Genesis; and the progressive development of the Bible is one of the charms of this wondrous volume. The earnest student sees that the Bible is not a mechanism but an organism, and that the divine Spirit breathes through all its parts. It has no artificial members, no incongruous elements, no monstrous portions. All are parts of a complete and beautiful whole. This truth cannot be too frequently nor too earnestly impressed upon the mind of all readers of the sacred pages.

In harmony with this unity we find the inspired writers quoting from one another. Each supports the affirmations and buttresses the declarations of the other. All have a unifying influence, and all tend to a completed whole. All its parts are materials in the same majestic temple; all the parts are notes in the same sublime oratorio. In this spirit Christ used the Old Testament. It has

three great voices, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms; but it is all one book. The burden of its testimony was the coming of the Christ of God. The Pentateuch illustrates the epistles; the gospels complete the prophecies; the epistle to the Hebrews expands, defines, and enforces the book of Leviticus. This harmony of parts would be impossible were it not for the unity of the whole. If we take up a volume by uninspired writers covering a period as long as that covered by the Bible, and including as great a variety of subjects and authorities as there are in the Bible, this volume being bound together as are the books of the Bible, it would contain an utterly heterogeneous mass of material, and would be a hopeless jumble of statements, allusions, and arguments. The purpose of the Bible declares, necessitates, and reveals its unity. We have already seen that it is not a text-book of geology, botany, astronomy, or of any of the sciences. We have also seen that it is the great text-book of salvation. Its chief design is to restore man to God's likeness. Nothing that is revealed in this volume is foreign to this peculiar design. All of the disclosures bear on this end. Only such history, and that of such nations, is given as is necessary to the development, illustration, and affirmation of the purpose of the volume. This is why the history of Israel has so much prominence. This is why other nations are only mentioned in relation to

Israel. The chief purpose of the book is ever present in all the wanderings of the patriarchs, in all the domestic relations described, and in the proverbs, psalms, precepts, promises, warnings and threatenings.

This unity is entirely independent of external accidents; it is that of inward coherence, that of spiritual intensity, and that of divine intuition; it is deeper than all outward circumstance, intenser than all mechanical relations. It is the unity which is found between seed and fruit, between body and spirit, between human need and divine supply.

It is thus seen that the Bible is the whole world in miniature. It is the product of the eternal purpose of the eternal mind which pervades all creation, all providence, and all revelation. There is thus in the Bible an inseparable unity between all its parts and its divine design—the redemption of man in Jesus Christ. In one of his grandest outbursts of almost superhuman eloquence, Henry Ward Beecher illustrates the unity of the Bible by comparing it to Beethoven's matchless music. He tells us how one idea is worked out in this music through all the changes of measure and of key; now it is almost hidden, and now breaks out in rich, natural melody; then it is "whispered in the treble, murmured in the bass, dimly suggested in the prelude, but growing clearer and clearer as the work proceeds, winding gradually back until

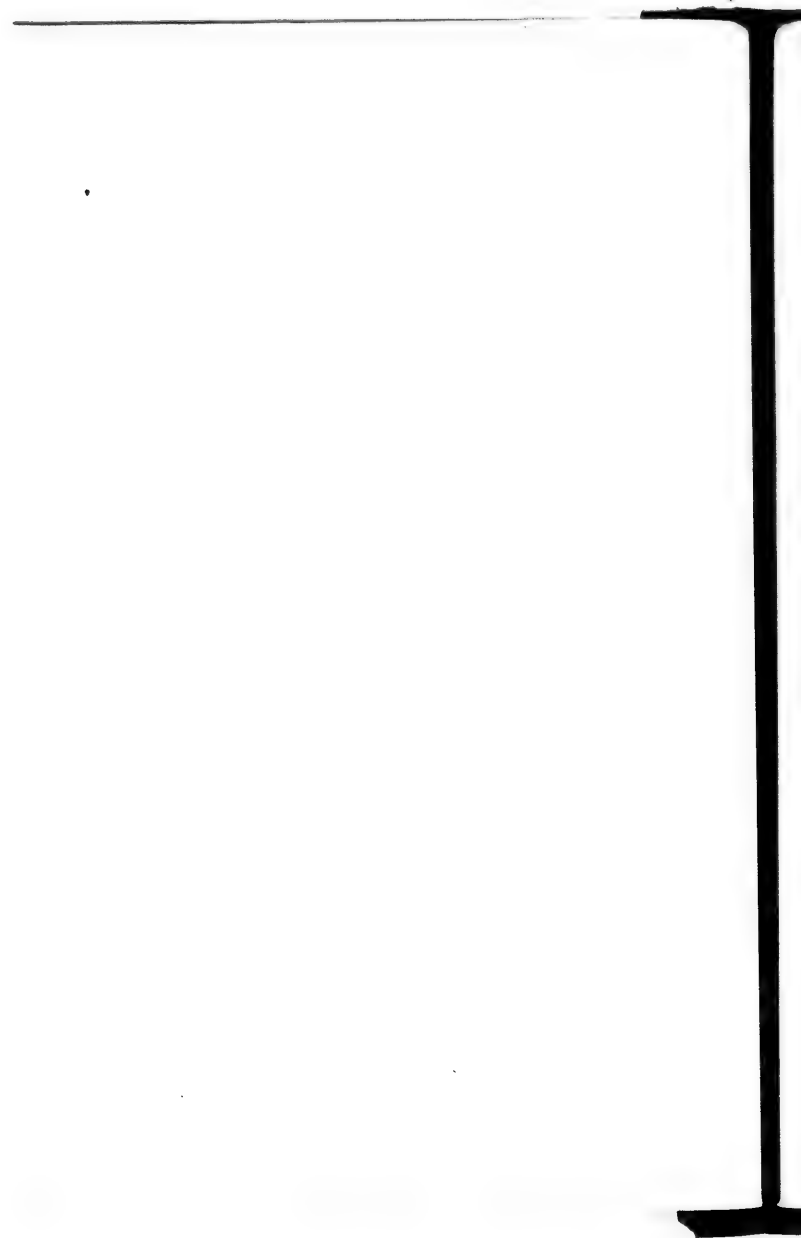
it ends in the key in which it began, and closes in triumphant harmony." Thus he shows that throughout the whole Bible there runs one great idea. This idea is man ruined by sin, and his redemption by grace. This result is found in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of men. This thought was typified in the sanctions of the law; it was even dimly promised at the fall, and then more clearly to Abraham. Christ is the Shiloh spoken of by Jacob; he is called the star by Balaam; the Prophet by Moses; the Redeemer looked for by Job, and the "Beloved" of the Song of Songs. Thus we may find Christ in the sublime strains of Isaiah, in the weird visions of Daniel, and in the profound mysteries of Ezekiel. In the fulness of time the angels sang their song over the plains of Bethlehem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Jesus Christ was the key-note of that angelic oratorio. He is the diapason of the redemptive song from Genesis to Revelation. He is the unitive element in the Bible. He is the concordant note in humanity.

The same thought of unity is seen everywhere in the Church of Jesus Christ. This thought the apostles emphasize and illustrate. As the body has many parts and is yet one body, so each local church has many members and is yet one body. In like manner many local churches unite as necessary parts of a common whole, to form one de-

nomination of Christians; and in a larger sense, in their social unity many bodies of Christians unite in the one Church of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the unifier of the Bible, the unifier of each local church, and the unifier of all true churches of every name. And He will eventually be the unifier of the redeemed earth and the revealed heaven, when the holy city, the new Jerusalem, shall come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Jesus Christ will be the light, life, unity, and glory of that heavenly city.

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THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE
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XII.

THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

WHAT is history? Many answers have been given to this question. We shall not be in error when we reply that history is a systematic narrative of events in which man has participated. A history may be called a chronicle when it is simply a record of successive times. It is properly called a narrative when it is only a story of events. But history, in the modern sense of the term, takes account of the causes of events, and the consequences resulting from their occurrence. This new element in history makes it a science or a philosophy. Until about the time of the Reformation, history was chiefly narrative or chronicle; it consisted, for the most part, merely of annals. But with the introduction of the Reformation, there came a new element in history; there came then to be a history of history. The old historians were satisfied with giving us only a bare recital of events; the newer histories accompanied the recital by philosophical reflections, attempting to discover the mutual relations of events and the consequences to which they led. This element in history was illustrated with great force and propriety in connection with the

Reformation itself. The adherents of the various churches, each from his own point of view, moralized upon that remarkable national and international revolution, endeavoring to discover the political and social elements which entered into it, and which produced so remarkable results, intellectually, socially, and religiously. This thought makes historical events an appropriate subject of criticism. We shall be unworthy of the name of historians or intelligent students of history except we learn how rightly to estimate its causes and results. The reverent historian will trace the great movements to the development of moral principle and finally to the overruling providence of God. The purpose of God will be seen to work without cessation in human events, carrying out the counsel of the divine will. With that thought in view, Dr. Schaff defines church history to be "the unfolding in time of the eternal purpose of redeeming love. It is the progressive development of the kingdom of heaven upon earth, for the glory of God and the salvation of the world." What Dr. Schaff has here said of church history is true in its ultimate reach of all history. The distinction between secular and sacred history is largely an artificial distinction. To the reverent soul all history is sacred. A true historical student, inspired by this spirit, sees God's hand behind all human events; he sees God's hand directing the loom in which is woven the web with all

the colors of human thought and life. Not only in matters of history, but in current events generally, we have made too wide a separation between what we call sacred and secular things. God has never withdrawn from the rulership of this world; the pierced hand of Jesus Christ is on the helm of the universe, guiding all its events, great and small, for the good of man and the glory of God.

THE BIBLE ANCIENT HISTORY.

The Bible gives us an ancient record of primitive events. It takes us back to the very dawn of human life and to the beginnings of all the great movements which have culminated in the civilizations of all the races of men. Moses has given us an account of the creation, brief, vivid, comprehensive, and majestic. His purpose was not so much to show how the world and man were made, as to declare that God was the Maker of both. In this early history we are told of the origin of the material universe and the creation of the human race; we are instructed as to the beginning of sin and death; we are also informed regarding various institutions, such as the Sabbath and marriage, and of the great emigrations by which the earth was civilized. This early history is not intended, in the modern sense, to be scientific; but, as we have already seen, there is no absolute proof that any statement in this primitive record is untrue to the facts of science as they are

established by the latest scholarship. In this early record we learn of the weakness of man, of his destruction by the flood, of the preservation of righteous Noah and his family, of the call of Abraham, and the rise of the Hebrew people, of the formation of the new nation, and of the characteristics of its political and religious history. We learn also of the relations of this peculiar nation to God and to the earth. We have to follow the record of the beginning of God's law with the dimly suggested promises regarding the great redemption which reached its noonday light and glory in Jesus Christ. This record is of the utmost value to all students of history. It is not free from its difficulties, any more than are questions of physical science and of mental philosophy; but apart from all theory this history remains as one of the most valuable records ever given to the human race.

We discover that these inspired writers, especially in those primitive records, deal not so much with doctrine as with events. The result is that they give us a history which is in no narrow sense a history of the race. It is of the utmost importance that such a history should be absolutely truthful, that the record should be in full harmony with the facts thus recorded. Other nations have given us various histories, some of which are extremely valuable in themselves considered and because of the light which they throw upon the history of the Hebrew nation as it is recorded on the

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sacred page. We have valuable historical writings on the monoliths, temples, and pyramids of Egypt, on the cuneiform inscriptions of Assyria, and also those found in many forms in ancient Greek and Phœnician ruins. Probably we can trace the history of Egypt to a period at least four thousand years before Christ. It was near the close of the fifth century before Christ that Herodotus, generally known as the "father of history," was born, and his works take high rank among the great histories of the world. It is generally supposed that it was his intention to write a universal history. If such was his design, he was never able to realize it, as his history is but a partial record of the wars between Greece and the barbarians, with incidental geographical and historical references to other peoples. There is a general agreement among historical scholars that Thucydides is the second great historian, although he differs in aims, methods, and results from Herodotus. He, to a remarkable degree, illustrated a philosophic tendency, in his study of history; he somewhat anticipated the methods which obtained general recognition, as we have already observed, about the time of the Reformation. He strove to explain the actions which he records, not being satisfied with the mere narrative itself. Polybius was an accurate and sympathetic student of Thucydides, and he enlarged and improved upon the works of his master. But as a rule the historians both of

Greece and Rome confined themselves at that time to narrative, to mere annals. This was the method of Xenophon with his "Anabasis," of Cæsar in his "Commentaries," and even of the more scientific Livy in his more extended history. Tacitus possessed, to a greater degree than those we have named the philosophic spirit in his great history, and as a result he portrayed tyranny in dark colors and strove to discover the connection between causes and effects. Eusebius was the first sacred historian to deserve mention. Sir Walter Raleigh gave us fascinating chronicles of fresh discoveries. But the philosophic conception of history is, as we have seen, of late date and was of slow growth. A great advance was necessarily taken when printing was introduced, even as earlier there was marked advance when the use of writing was discovered. We would be sorry to lose the chronicles, as we would be to omit the names of the imaginative writers in mediæval periods, who revived the historic element which long had lain dormant, although they had no true conception of the historic relation of events. It was long ago said, probably by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and quoted by Bolingbroke, that "history is philosophy teaching by example." This principle in history is illustrated in the works of Macaulay, Prescott, Motley, and Froude, who have displayed the romantic side of history, making its record glowing and fascinating, while for the most part

they remain within the limits of historic veracity. We all must recognize the fact that history is to a great degree the combination of human peculiarities, so that the biographical character will always be an important element in the work of the true historian.

TRUTHFUL HISTORY.

These principles have illustration in the history recorded in the Bible. With all the discoveries of modern times it has not been shown that Biblical history is in any essential particulars untrustworthy. So far as we have had opportunity of testing the truthfulness of sacred history, it stands the test to a remarkable degree. The accumulated store of knowledge concerning past ages, as found in the Bible, is indorsed by modern discovery, showing the great harmony between sacred and profane history. The monuments and hieroglyphics of Egypt, as well as the writings of such historians as Herodotus, Xenophon, and Josephus, establish not only the general agreement but the minute harmony between the inspired writers and the heathen historians. Differences arise regarding chronological statements, but many of these differences can be explained on the ground of the carelessness of copyists and the ease with which blunders may be made in the giving of figures and in making statistical records of any kind. Professor Rawlinson says, as quoted by Mr. William

Walters, "In four instances thus, of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, our knowledge of the condition of the people at the time indicated, being exact and copious if not complete, the comparison may be made *in extenso*; and it is especially in these four instances that the harmony between the sacred and the profane is most striking." Voltaire and others of his school objected to the Bible because it gave so much space to the history of the Jewish people. This is an utterly frivolous objection. The book was intended to give prominence to this chosen race. It gave the history of other nations chiefly in their relation to this people, and it subordinated every element, historical, linguistic, and philosophical, to the one grand design of unfolding the purpose of God in human redemption. The Jewish people were under the tuition of God, and so had a great part to play in disseminating His truth and in illustrating His divine purpose. No one can read the records of the Old Testament without being profoundly impressed with their lifelike character. One sees at once in reading the story of the Exodus that the writer was familiar with the territory which he describes; its geography was mapped out before his eye while he recorded the narrative. It would seem as if parts of the record were a daily journal. It is difficult to name any history possessing the quality that comes from the writing of an eye-witness to a greater degree than some portions of the

history found in the Pentateuch. There is an air of naturalness, of contemporaneousness, of verisimilitude of which every intelligent reader must be conscious as he studies these ancient records. They are very far removed from the coldness and the formality characteristic of many historians. They combine the essentials of the best examples even of modern historic methods. We have statistical facts embellished by the charms of good writing; we have accurate personal knowledge expressed in truthful forms of speech; and pervading the whole narrative there is a degree of personal conviction and of consciousness of the divine presence which give warmth, vitality, personality, and divinity to the whole narrative. God is seen to be the great Mover of all the events of which His people are a part. He vitalizes, energizes, and spiritualizes all the story by the manifestation of His august presence and His divine glory.

DIFFICULTIES IN OTHER HISTORIES.

Valuable contributions are now being made to the history of British India; and, without doubt, before many years shall pass the old stories of the heinous crimes which were alleged against Clive and Hastings will be thoroughly disproved, or at least greatly modified. Sir Alfred Lyall, a high authority on all Indian matters, declares that "the hardihood and endurance of the men who won for England an empire were equalled

only by the general justice and patience with which they fashioned and administered it." Unfortunately thousands of excellent people will still feel what they believe to be a righteous wrath because of the supposed atrocious acts of Clive and Hastings. Three features of those acts are always prominent when this part of Anglo-Indian history is under discussion: the judicial murder of Nandkumar, the extermination of the Rohillas, and the plunder of the Begums. The suspicion never reaches the average reader of Indian history that these horrors never occurred. It has been well said that disparagement of their own countrymen is a common failing of unwise Englishmen. A similar remark is fully illustrated in American history, even at this hour, by those who denounce the President of the United States and his advisers. Burke calls such persons "birds of evil presage, who have at all times greeted our ears with melancholy song." Such critics find in the supposed crimes of the founders of the Indian Empire unending sources of denunciation, invective, and obloquy. Unfortunately this false history is taught in schools and colleges throughout the English-speaking world; and still more unfortunately, it is taught to and believed by the educated natives of India to be literally true. These natives thus grow up with bitterness of feeling toward their English rulers, and with a constant tendency to rebel against their authority. Sir James

Stevens and Sir Henry Maine have given careful and dispassionate criticism to this period of history. The chief criminal in all this matter was James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill. Sir John Strachey, in his "India," affirms that Mill's history was saturated with party politics, but because of its "excessive dryness and severity of style" it produced upon many the impression that it was entirely accurate. Sir John Strachey did not rest his affirmations on the conclusions reached by Stevens and Maine, but by careful examination of original documents he qualified himself to form and express an independent judgment on the whole subject. Several years of his Indian service were passed in the province of Rohilkhand. When he first went to that province, men were still living who remembered hearing in childhood a story of the great Rohilla chief, of his defeat by the British, and of his death. He tells us that he went to that province without a doubt as to the truth of the terrible story told by Mill, by Burke, and by Lord Macaulay in his famous essay on Warren Hastings. He soon found, to his utter surprise, after mingling with the people and meeting a Rohilla prince, that the atrocities which to this day fill Britain with shame had never been heard by the children and grandchildren of the men whose race was supposed to have been well-nigh exterminated. He later examined original authorities on the Rohilla war, and his indignation

was great when he found that James Mill had been guilty of garbling documents and teaching utter falsehood by the suppression of truth. He discovered that the English army was not hired out by Hastings for the destruction of the Rohillas; that the Rohillas whom Burke describes as "belonging to the bravest and most honorable and generous nation on earth," were not a nation at all, but a small body of cruel and rapacious Afghan adventurers who had imposed their unwelcome and false war on the unwilling Hindu population, and that the entire story of their destruction by Hastings was false from beginning to end. Unfortunately Macaulay accepted Mill as a reliable authority. It is not too much to say that there is scarcely one statement of fact in Macaulay's essay which was not taken from Mill's history, except those statements which were taken from the equally unreliable speeches of Burke. But no such discovery of inaccuracy has been found regarding the Bible history; and it is safe to say that no such inaccuracy will ever be found regarding that history.

THE PERSONALITY OF MOSES.

This matter is worthy of brief mention at this point. The criticism which arose some years ago regarding the personality of Homer has in these latter days arisen regarding the personality of Moses. Heyne, Wolfe, and Niebuhr indulge

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themselves in several varieties of historical scepticism regarding Homer. They reduced Homer as well as Cadmus and Hercules to mere "symbols." Some made the word Homer refer to an ideal patron of an association of poets, "Homeroi;" others made the word mean hostage; others gave it the meaning of "one who connects or combines," and still others made it mean "one who does not see." Before the days of Wolfe there were those who denied the existence of Homer on the ground that no one could remember and recite, in the absence of writing, poems of so great length. But we know that in the early days in Scotland, bards could recite legends and poems by the hour, and evening after evening. Just when the statement was made as to the impossibility of remembering poems of so great length as those of Homer, an English student arose who recited the Iliad *verbatim et literatim et punctuatim*; and a similar achievement has recently occurred in the recitation of Dante's "Divine Comedy." It is now found that there were written documents probably in the days of Homer. It is simply begging the question to say that no poet could compose and retain in memory verses of so great a length. It has been jokingly said that Homer's poems were not written by Homer, but by another man of the same name. Doubtless the Pentateuch is, without intending any pun upon the word, a mosaic. Moses as a sensible man certainly availed himself

of all accessible documents. His work will stand when all his critics are utterly forgotten.

We need not hesitate to affirm that whatever discoveries may be made in history, theology, or archæology, in all the years to come, there shall be no discovery which shall seriously reflect upon the historical accuracy of this glorious old library which we call the Bible. The fact is that witnesses are rising from the Libyan sands, from long-closed tombs, and from the records in stone and bronze, all testifying to the truth of this ancient narrative. This history is not only the oldest, but it is also the most faithful of all the histories that have ever been written. The hand of God is distinctly visible upon every page. Within the last generation Layard, Botta, and Smith have been exploring the mounds of Nineveh, and have made marvellous discoveries affirmatory of the Bible narrative. They have found sculptured memorials containing Assyrian accounts of events recorded in the books of Kings and Chronicles; they have found even the names Jehu, Hezekiah, and Omri; they have found Sennacherib's own account of his invasion of Palestine. It is thus as surprising as it is gratifying that after this long period tablets come forth from the grave of centuries to be the irrefutable witnesses to the truth of this old story written by God through the hands of men. God will take care of His word. Critics come and critics go; but, as He Himself has declared, His word shall stand forever.

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BIOGRAPHICAL HONESTY OF THE BIBLE.

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XIII.

BIOGRAPHICAL HONESTY OF THE BIBLE.

THE Bible dares tell the truth about its heroes and heroines. In this regard it is widely differentiated from every other biography. It does not hesitate to admit the sin committed by Abraham, by Lot, and by Isaac. It calls Lot a righteous man, and yet it frankly records his acts of unworthiness, humiliation, and open wickedness. These wrongs are nowhere concealed; on the contrary, they are called by their true names. David is the man after God's own heart, and yet David's heinous sin is fully recorded. Solomon acknowledges his guilt; and there is not one line he ever wrote which excuses one wrong which he ever committed.

MOST DIFFICULT WRITING.

Biography, and especially autobiography, is the most difficult of all kinds of literature. It seems to be almost impossible for the ordinary biographer to tell the truth regarding the subject whose history he is writing. Uninspired biographers deny or minify the vices of their subjects, and they create or magnify their virtues. Few men

are fitted even to undertake this difficult kind of literature. We know that even in our own day it is rare to find a man with the self-poise, the varied information, the absolute honesty, and the unflinching courage necessary to write a complete and accurate biography. Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay" takes very high rank as a biography in all the best qualities of this difficult form of literature. It is easy to count on the fingers of one's two hands the biographies of any one generation which come up to the highest literary standards. The recent biography of Tennyson by his son Hallam, and a few others of recent times, come into the category of good literature of this character; but the rarity of discriminating biographies gives special prominence to the volumes which have attained high rank, and also enables us to judge more justly of this style of literature as found in the Bible. The Bible abounds in biographical sketches, and this fact is a marked element of the Bible's moral power. It enables us to see the influence of true religion in the development of noble character, and also to observe the vicious effects in individual lives of the dominion of evil. Biography is a sort of mirror in which the whole world may see the evil and the good in human character. It is to human life what the quiet lake is to the mountains, rocks, and trees standing upon its shore; we know that these are all faithfully reflected in its placid waters. No

kind of writing is more instructive, as none is more difficult of attainment. In attempting this kind of writing many able men utterly fail. Some men have written in malice, some in ignorance. Some men have written with fulsome eulogy, and some with detestable detraction. Great portions of biographical history need to be rewritten. It is quite certain, as already suggested, that great injustice has been done even to Clive and Hastings in relation to the establishment of the British Government in India. The time, doubtless, is soon coming when all that period of Anglo-Indian history will be rewritten, and when the judgments that have been passed upon the founders of the British Empire in India will be in many respects modified, and in some respects entirely reversed. There is reason to believe that political malice largely governed the statements of James Mill, which by their calmness, coolness, and clearness have been taken as the sober statements of historic truth.

We thus see how difficult it is to write accurate history, and especially biographical narratives. We are, therefore, the more ready to admire the charming and truthful biography which we constantly find in the Word of God. The writers of Scripture show at every point a commendable fidelity to absolute truth. They "nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice." Infirmities as well as excellencies they record. There is no

attempt on their part to blacken or to whiten their subjects. They neither besmear them with pitch nor cover them with whitewash. The evil in the good man is not denied, and the good in the evil man is frankly acknowledged. Uninspired biographers, as already remarked, find it almost impossible to come up to this high standard of writing. If some men could come back to life to hear their own funeral eulogies, read their obituaries, and peruse their biographies, they would be amazed to learn how immaculately good their lives were. Indeed, they would not recognize themselves as the subjects of these narratives. If some men could read the inscriptions on their tombstones, they would be absolutely certain that they were in the wrong graves, and that the tombstones must have been intended to record the virtues of men whose lives were quite other than their own.

When we turn to the Bible we have no such embarrassment on either side. Here there is no palliation of vices; here there is no exaggeration of virtues; here no untruthful panegyrics are recorded, even when praise is merited and bestowed; and here no malevolent denunciations are found, even when disapproval must necessarily be declared. The candor of the sacred writers is worthy of all praise. Moses is spoken of as one of the most patient of men, and yet the impatience of Moses is recorded. He must have shown a reprehensible impatience when he struck the rock at

Meribah. Who makes the record of that impatience? The answer is, Moses himself. David confesses his fearful wanderings with no attempt at extenuation. The fifty-first psalm is an outburst of grief and penitence which must touch every heart even to this hour. Almost every sentence in that psalm is a moan, every word a sob, and every syllable a tear. That psalm must ever appear in the Psalter as one of the humblest of penitential confessions. Nothing approaching it in this regard can be found in any other literature. Its manifestation of repentance is profound and unfeigned. The Psalmist makes confession of sinful deeds springing from a sinful nature and manifesting themselves in unpardonable conduct. Nowhere else can a confession be found so tender, so contrite, and so fervent. With the confession there is also a humble, filial trust in the forgiving love of God. The thirty-second psalm probably was written by David after he wrote the fifty-first. We know that Augustine used often to read, with weeping heart and eyes, shortly before his death, the seven penitential psalms, of which the thirty-second is one. He placed them on the wall over against his sick-bed, that he might constantly make their truths his own experience. The fifty-first psalm was David's great confession of sin and earnest prayer for forgiveness; and the thirty-second psalm is the record of the confession he had made and the forgiveness he had received. It ex-

presses his consciousness of restoration to his Father's house and heart. It is an outburst of his gladness when God's forgiveness had been received into his sinful, sorrowful, but penitent soul. His sin had been great, but it was not after all the hardened act of a selfish sensualist. When the prophet came, David turned with genuine sorrow to God, praying for forgiveness. From its uneasy slumber his really sensitive conscience was aroused, and it could find no rest until full forgiveness was received. In the presence of these two great psalms we can readily understand how David was "the man after's God's own heart." Carlyle, with a superb scorn, denounces those who speak of David only as a great sinner and not also as a great repenter, who hold him before the world as deeply peccant and not as also genuinely repentant. In this respect Carlyle has spoken a great truth; he has uttered a needed rebuke, and has emphasized a commendable criticism. The Bible reveals God as holy, just, and good. It also represents Him as delighting in mercy. It sets His character before us as the ideal of our attainment; for we are exhorted to be holy even as He is holy. It offers rewards to the obedient, and utters threatenings against the disobedient. It places before us every dissuasion from sin, and every incentive to holiness. It deals with great principles of heart and motives of life. It does not lay down numerous petty rules, but great general laws, and then gives

us the spirit to understand and the desire to apply these laws in our daily lives. David frankly confesses his sin, devoutly offers his prayer for forgiveness, and greatly rejoices in the conscious possession of God's mercy.

HONESTY IN THE NARRATIVE.

Who narrates the account of Jonah's fleeing to Tarshish in disobedience to the command of God? None other than Jonah himself writes this humiliating narrative. His conduct was childish, petulant, and disobedient in the extreme. He seems to have been, at times at least, painfully morose, pitifully peevish, and perhaps helplessly melancholic. It is not too much to say that occasionally he was scarcely responsible for his conduct. He was possessed of a hypochondriacal temperament, being easily discouraged and easily elated. He was timid or courageous, according as one mood or the opposite was dominant. He was under the influence of the heathenism of his time, and yet was a patriotic lover of his people and an earnest hater of all the oppressors of his nation. He records with the utmost frankness not only his one great act of disobedience to God, but also his condition of childish disappointment in the destruction of the rapid-growing gourd. With absolute fidelity he paints his own unattractive portrait. His story is, however, one of fascinating interest. Apart from the miraculous element which has

subjected it to the criticism of the exegetes and has led some to question its historicity, it is simply as a story one of the most charming short stories of any literature. The man who will sit down to read it as he might read any other book, apart altogether from the thought of its inspiration or its ultimate purpose, cannot fail to be delighted with the novelty of the narrative, the frankness of the narrator, and the archaic charm of the incident described.

When we turn to the New Testament, we discover similar frankness. Mark is supposed to have been the amanuensis of the apostle Peter. It is at least believed that he wrote under this apostle's direction. It is therefore the more noticeable that Mark gives so full an account of Peter's cowardly and blasphemous denial of his divine Lord and Master. In these narratives we have the great heart of the impulsive but noble disciple voicing itself with absolute honesty, without effort at vindication or justification of any sort. The portrait of Peter is here painted to the life. Had he not been governed by absolute honesty, he might have entirely concealed or at least greatly modified many of the most damaging features of his unmanly and unholy conduct toward his Lord. We cannot but admire the absolute honesty of the Bible in its biographical narrations. There is here a lesson for us all. We are not to judge men by their worst, nor yet by their best elements of

character; so judging them, we shall be guilty of misjudging. We should not judge the sun by its spots, but rather by its light and its heat. We must judge men in their entirety, in their sphe-ricity, in their completeness of character and conduct. This rule we ought to apply with the utmost honesty, fidelity, and constancy to all our fellowmen; this rule the Bible seems to observe in all the biographies which it contains. We have no right to pass a harsh judgment upon men except we know all the influences which bore upon their opinions and action. It is an unspeakable comfort for us to remember that the Judge of all the earth will do absolutely right. God knows every influence which has been brought to bear upon men in the way of incitement or restraint. Many a man, because of his environment, has outwardly, at least, refrained from sin, while many another man, because of the absence of that restraining environment, has been involved in guilt. The natural impulse of the former may have been less noble than the natural tendency of the latter. The difference in conduct was due quite as much to difference in circumstances as to difference in character. Here as everywhere we may fall back with unspeakable comfort upon the omniscience of God, as directed by His unerring justice and His infinite love.

VARIETY IN BIBLE BIOGRAPHY.

There is in the Bible a great variety in these biographies, as we have observed varieties in so many other respects. We have here representatives of nearly all classes and conditions of men. On the pages of the Bible varied and often opposing classes meet. Kings and warriors, shepherds and agriculturists, poets and priests here give their manifold charms to this ancient narrative. Occasionally we have but faint outlines of portraits, and at other times full-sized pictures, with every outline boldly sketched. Often we wish that some of the biographies were fuller than divine wisdom has chosen to give them in the inspired narrative. The great life is evermore that of Him who spake and lived as never did any other being. His is the matchless biography, His is the peerless character, and He is the perfect man. It is worth much to the world that we have a fourfold biography of Him who was the Son of God and the Son of Mary, the Ancient of Days and the Child of the Manger. These narratives are artless, simple, and sublime. Jesus Christ was the God-man. His life is unique, even as was His birth. Such a birth would suggest such a life. He who came into the world as never did any other man would be expected to live in the world as no other man ever lived. It would be well-nigh unthinkable if a life so begun had not been so continued; and

what might have been expected was actually realized. In writing this biography the evangelists had no model. The life they record stands alone on the pages of universal history. We see in it at every point the union of the human and the divine. How could uninspired men write correctly such an inspired life? Now one element of that life is especially conspicuous, and now another element is presented to our view. We see Christ as a familiar guest at the wedding in Cana of Galilee; and then we see Him putting forth His power as the creative Word. Finely did Crashaw long ago sing,

"The conscious water saw its God and blushed."

We see this same Saviour weak and weary as any traveller at Jacob's well; but soon we behold Him speaking words of heavenly wisdom and revealing Himself to the woman of Samaria as the Christ of God. At the grave of Lazarus He pours out His sympathetic tears; and in the midst of weeping friends He utters His majestic voice as the Resurrection and the Life. We see Him weary in the boat, His head upon the wooden pillow, while the spray dashes in His face and bedews His hair; then we see Him rising in His majesty and hushing the storm into perfect calm by His omnipotent word. If a divine life had not been lived before these evangelists, and which they truthfully describe, then they themselves must have been di-

vine. It is less a tax on our credulity to believe that Christ lived as the evangelists have described His character and conduct, than to suppose that they could have imagined such a life had it not been lived in their presence. They who charge the evangelists with having written this narrative out of their own imagination virtually affirm that the evangelists were themselves the Christ of God.

Wherever the Bible is read and believed, life is ennobled. Every man's biography is to some degree purified and spiritualized wherever the inspired narratives are read and the divine truths taught are obeyed. Every language into which the Bible has been translated has been greatly exalted, somewhat spiritualized, and even immortalized. The divine thought circulating through human speech has charged that speech with somewhat of its own energy. Thus the German language received much of its life from Luther's translation of the Bible; and thus English has been humanized, vitalized, and spiritualized to go on its way girdling the world with blessing.

Who gave its writers their unique skill?

" Whence but from heaven could man, unskilled in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? Or how or why
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gains, and martyrdom their price!"

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THE MATCHLESS POETRY OF THE BIBLE.

I

XIV.

THE MATCHLESS POETRY OF THE BIBLE.

THE most enthusiastic and partial student of classical poetry is obliged to confess that there is no poetry in any literature equal to that found in the Bible. We have the testimony of men who were themselves great poets, who do not hesitate for a moment to give the poetry of the Bible a unique place in the rhythmical literature of the world. Sir William Jones, a critic of no mean authority, says: "I am of opinion that the Bible contains more true sensibility, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more impartial history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may be written." It is the testimony of John Milton, the immortal bard who came into the immediate presence of God as never did any other uninspired poet, that "there are no songs comparable to the songs of Zion, no orations equal to those of the prophets, and no politics like those which the Scriptures teach."

WHAT IS POETRY?

It is not easy to give a satisfactory answer to this question. Most of our writers who have undertaken a definition of poetry have recognized the difficulty of the task. Aristotle says that "poetry is imitation"; Thomas Fuller, "poetry is music in words"; Dr. Johnson, "the art of pleasing"; and Thomas Carlyle calls it "impassioned truth." It has also been defined as "the beauty of ideas, distinct from the beauty of things"; and another writer declares that poetry is "love for all that is beautiful, burning to passion, attired in imagery, and speaking in music." It is certain that poetry is that form of literature which embodies beautiful thought, feeling, or action in rhythmical and melodious language; it is one of the noblest of arts, addressing itself to the finer feelings and imagination by means of musical and moving words. Macaulay defines poetry to be "the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the imagination, the art of doing by means of words what the painter does by means of colors." Bailey, in his "Festus," declares that—

"Poetry is itself a thing of God :
He made His prophets poets : and the more
We feel of poesie, do we become
Like God, in love and power—under-makers."

Coleridge tells us that "poetry is not the proper

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THE MATCHLESS POETRY OF THE BIBLE. 241

antithesis to prose, but to science; poetry is op-
posed to science, and prose to metre." E. C.
Stedman, in his "Nature of Poetry," affirms that
"poetry is rhythmical imaginative language ex-
pressing the invention, taste, thought, passion, and
insight of the human soul." It would be easy to
give many other definitions of poetry equally as
interesting and descriptive as those already given;
but we need not multiply words in mere definition.
We know that according to the etymology of the
word it signifies a creation or production of some
sort. The Greeks employ its classical equivalent
to designate the artistic productions of the imagi-
nation expressed in language. We know well that
poetry is not necessarily associated with verse or
rhyme. It often finds superb expression in prose.
The book of Ruth is eminently poetic in sub-
stance, although in form it is prose. Many parts
of the book of Job and of the prophetic writings
are also distinctively poetical. It would be easy
to name writers of recent and comparatively
recent times, such as Jeremy Taylor, Hooker,
Burke, Ruskin, Hawthorne, and Emerson, many
of whose works, though in the form of prose, are
richly imaginative and are truly poetical. In gen-
eral, however, poetry tends to express itself in
certain rules of metre, and also to assume rhyth-
mical language. The music of the metre height-
ens the emotions and tends by mysterious but uni-
versal laws to seek expression in measured forms.

Whatever may be our definition of poetry, we shall find that it has some of its noblest illustrations in the Word of God. There, if ever, we may have examples of Shakespeare's thought when he tells us that—

"The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

We know that there are various kinds of poetry, such as the epic, the lyric, the pastoral, the dramatic, the elegiac, and still other forms. Striking examples of these various types of poetry are found in the Bible. The examples of pastoral poetry there found are worthy of our careful consideration. This is that form of poetry which delineates the scenery, sentiment, and experience of shepherd life. Probably the very earliest attempts to give rhythmical expression to human thought assumed the form of pastoral poetry. Shepherds represented a large proportion of the population in primitive times, and their pastoral songs and metres would naturally take their form from their daily pursuits and environments. As a distinct branch of poetic art, pastoral poetry was not cultivated until a comparatively late day; but it must be affirmed that the Hebrew patriarchs, prophets, and poets give us some of the most noticeable

examples of this style of poetic composition to be found in any language. The story of Ruth is idyllic in beauty, often pastoral in form, and charming in spirit, and the twenty-third psalm is as peerless in its pastoral charm as it is tender in its religious associations. We have, as classical pastorals, the idylls of Theocritus as among the oldest specimens of this character. These appeared nearly three hundred years before Christ. They came long after Greece had given the world her masterpieces in epic poetry, as well as immortal productions in lyric poetry, tragedy, comedy, philosophy, and rhetoric. Among the Latins, the refined and courtly Virgil, in his Eclogues, following the model of Greek predecessors, has given beautiful and melodious examples of this style of production. During the Middle Ages pastoral poetry was largely unknown; with the revival of the classic spirit, however, the pastoral soon reappears. England and Scotland have given us fine examples of this simple and charming element in poetic composition. But nowhere shall we find this style of poetry of a nobler character and of more enduring fame than we find it in the Word of God. Some psalms of David sing themselves in the soul with the song of the bird, the odor of the flower, and the fragrance of the field as their inseparable accompaniments. So long as cultivated minds enjoy pastoral poetry, so long will these sweet songs of Israel's immortal singer have their place on the

page of the Bible and in the memory of all its devoted students.

Not otherwise is it with lyric poetry. This is a name given to songs which originally were accompanied by the music of the lyre. This species of poetry is closely related with the thoughts, sentiments, and emotions of the composer's own mind and heart. It is subjective, in opposition to epic poetry, which necessarily is chiefly objective. It therefore comes to be marked by shorter productions than epics, whose historic sweep necessarily lengthens the poem itself. Lyric poems are songs of war, of home, and of love; they are the songs, to a remarkable degree, of the heart. And as a result they have a great place in the thought of simple as well as cultured minds in all ages and in all parts of the world. In this poetry the Bible abounds and excels. Here we see the heart abandoning itself, under the sway of lofty emotion and divine inspiration, to its fullest and noblest expression. We see the poet clothing his own feelings and the feelings of others in glowing language, as the feelings express themselves in lofty emotion. In the Bible we hear the very music of Hebrew life, home, and love. We have lyrics expressing gratitude in public worship, and sweetness and tenderness in domestic affection. We have lyrics commemorating heroic victories, celebrating Jewish marriages, and embodying profoundest grief. As we read these stirring lyrics

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we seem to hear the ancient Hebrew lyre as its music echoes from harvest fields, Jewish homes, and loathsome prisons, as well as from the hill-sides of the land and the temple of God.

We also have in the Bible some of the very best examples of elegiac poetry. In David's lament over the death of Saul and Jonathan we have a blending of human sorrow and poetic beauty such as can scarcely be surpassed or even equalled by any other literature in the world. This lamentation is a picture of distress as tender as it is striking. Here a great soul pours itself out in images of manly love and in language of genuine poetic fervor. It is almost impossible to read the noble words without finding every word "swollen with a sigh or broken with a sob." This sublime lamentation deserves to have a conspicuous place on the page of literature wherever tender sentiment, heroic courage, and poetic beauty are admired.

We have not in the Bible any example of epic poetry. Perhaps it is not to be expected that this species of poetry should find place on the page of revelation. It refers, as has already been hinted, chiefly to outward objects for its subject. It finds its best embodiment in such works as the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" of Homer, the "Æneid" of Virgil, the "Jerusalem Delivered" of Tasso, Milton's "Paradise Lost," and Dante's "Divine Comedy." Neither do we find in the Bible the drama in its fulness. It ought to be affirmed, however,

that in the Old Testament there are numerous instances of dramatic dialogue, as in the book of Job, and also of lyric poems, placed in dramatic connections, in Solomon's Song. But the drama in the strictly technical sense we do not find in Hebrew literature. It is to Greece alone that we must look for the invention of the drama in its perfection of poetical art and human genius. We do not expect in the Bible to find either a Euripides or a Shakespeare. The most recent criticism, however, has fully and satisfactorily shown that the Song of Solomon contains many genuine dramatic features. Solomon is a type of a sensual monarch. He has carried off to his harem a northern shepherd maiden. In the poem she appears surrounded by ladies of his court, who endeavor to induce her to submit to the life which awaits her in the palace. The king, however, is unable to overcome the maiden's fervent attachment to her shepherd lover whom she has left behind in the north country. Sovereign though he is, he is finally obliged to retire from pressing his suit, and to acknowledge himself thwarted in his desire. The poem closes with the triumph of pure and loyal love in the happy union of these peasant lovers. All through the history of the Church commentators have found that this beautiful song was a song of love; but whether it was earthly or spiritual love was a question that greatly perplexed Biblical critics. Many of the interpretations are

allegorical, the Church and Christ appearing as the chief subjects in the poem; Christ being the beloved bridegroom, and the believing and loving soul being the Church, the bride. Whatever interpretation may be given, the presence of the dramatic element in this Song of Songs must be recognized, and it is recognized in the later interpretations, which give the poem a clear setting and make its movement strong in thought, clear in action, and inspired in its result.

THE HEBREW BARD.

The Hebrew bard chose lofty subjects as the elements of his inspired song. In its source, its theme, and its method, the poetry of the Bible surpasses all other poetic literature. It throbs with human interest, it abounds in charming references to domestic life, it glows with human hopes, at times it weeps with human sorrow, and it carries us back to the primitive habits of an ancient people. It is equally adapted to funeral obsequies and to marriage festivities. There is no condition in life to which it does not properly belong. Well has Sir Daniel Sanford, a man of broad culture and ability as marked as it was varied, said that "In lyric flow and fire, in crushing force, in majesty that seems still to echo the awful sounds once heard beneath the thunder-clouds of Mount Sinai, the poetry of the ancient Scriptures is the most superb that ever burned within the

breast of man." Every reader of the book of Job—and certainly every reader who has sat down and read it through without interruption—will feel the full force of the words of Thomas Carlyle, that burly Scotchman whose own prose often glows with poetic beauty, while it is roborant in its rugged strength, that apart from all theories about the book, it is one of the grandest things ever written with pen; and then he adds: "Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation, oldest choral melody as of the heart of mankind, soft and great as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars! There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit." No man can read the thirty-eighth chapter of the book of Job, containing the account of God's challenge to Job to answer, and God's enumeration of His mighty works, without feeling the full force of Carlyle's strong words. The book of Job alone is enough to give the Bible a high place among the noblest literatures of the world. The man who does not feel the rhetorical grandeur, the dramatic charm, and the lofty religious motive of this book is lacking in many of the noblest elements of manhood. Emerson has told us that "A man is a whole encyclopædia of facts. The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn, and Egypt, Greece, Rome, Gaul, Britain, America lie folded already in the first man." One might almost say with equal truth that all literatures, all dramas,

histories, lyrics, sermons, orations lie folded in this one book which we call the Bible. All the great literatures of the future are in the dictionaries of to-day and to-morrow. All that is needed is the presence of some tuneful soul who shall wed word to word. Then we shall have stately epics, powerful tragedies, resistless dramas, tearful elegies, and glowing lyrics. Then we shall have poem on poem, powerful sermons, eloquent orations, and masterful histories. They are all in the dictionary of to-day and to-morrow. In like manner the Bible is the fountain, the source, the inspiration of literature, of painting, of sculpture, of music, and of all the noblest productions of the greatest souls standing with uncovered head and uplifted heart in the immediate presence of the Almighty.

It was thus that the Hebrew bards stood and sang. They saw God in sunshine and storm. They heard His voice in the rolling thunder and witnessed His power in the flashing lightning. In all the events of history they saw the tokens of His presence. They heard the echo of His foot-falls sounding through the corridors of their past history. Their poetry then was in the largest and truest sense as original as it was powerful and divine. They had no teachers; they belonged to no schools of poetry; they had no masters whom they might imitate. The student of uninspired poetry discovers the influence, even in Browning

and Tennyson, of great masters of former generations. When he enlarges the boundaries of his inquiries, and studies these great masters themselves, he finds in the poems the influence of their masters of a still earlier period. And thus he might go back and back to the earlier bards of the most primitive peoples. But in the themes, the method, and the spirit of Bible poetry there are no echoes of earlier singers; but these Bible songs have resounded through all the ages in the echoes of the noblest human poets of every century and country. In all these respects the poetry of the Bible is unique.

It is not too much to say, even in the close of the nineteenth century, that the most popular poet in all the world is "Israel's sweet singer." This statement at first thought seems to be a great exaggeration, but a little reflection will show that it is absolutely true, even when taken in the most literal sense. The Bible is still the most popular book in all the most highly civilized nations. Judged simply by the number of copies manufactured and sold, it is far in advance of all competitors for popularity. Well has Disraeli, in his "Tancred," expressed this thought. This most eloquent Israelite has not gone beyond the bounds of truth when he declares that "as an exponent of the mysteries of the human heart, as the soother of the troubled spirit, to whose harp do the people of England fly for sympathy and solace? Is it to

Byron or Wordsworth, or even to the myriad-minded Shakespeare? No; the most popular poet in England is the 'sweet singer of Israel,' and by no other race (except his own) have his odes been so often sung. It was 'the sword of the Lord and of Gideon' that won for England its boasted liberties, and the Scotch achieved their religious freedom chanting upon their hillsides the same canticles which cheered the heart of Judah amid their glens."

Let us read the histories, and repeat and love the poetry of the Bible. It is peerless among the great poems and poets of the world. We ought to bathe our souls in the atmosphere of these inspired songs. We may once more hear these songs, as they come, at times wild as the storm, and then gentle as the zephyr, from the plains and forests, prisons, palaces, and temples of Israel, in her land of song and story. Let us master the poetry of the Greek and Latin classics; let us make household words of the immortal poems of Chaucer, of Milton, of Cowper, of Wordsworth, of Browning, of Tennyson, of Lowell, of Longfellow, and of a score more on both sides of the sea, both of the earlier and later times. But if every other poet must be forgotten, let us baptize our souls in the poetry of the bards of the Bible. This poetry is the inspiration of heaven. This poetry echoes the words of the Almighty. It sings the song of redemption. It chants the prophecy of heaven; and

it blends, even as we sing it on earth, with the songs of saints and seraphs, of angels and arch-angels, whose voices are like the sound of many waters, as they sing, in the immediate presence of their King, the immortal and celestial song of Moses and the Lamb.

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THE AGGRESSIVE MISSION OF THE
BIBLE.

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XV.

THE AGGRESSIVE MISSION OF THE BIBLE.

THE Bible is a potent force among the elements of civilization; indeed, at times it has been the dominant force amid the influences making for civilization, culture, and general intelligence and prosperity. In the nature of the case, it cannot be merely a negative influence. There is an "irrepressible conflict" between right and wrong, light and darkness, good and evil. Our Lord said that He came not to send peace, but a sword. What was true of Him who was the incarnate Word of God is true, in a modified sense, of the book which is the revealed Word of God. Nothing is more certain than that the period of our Lord's coming in the flesh was marked by unusual activity of all the forces of evil. It was a time when irregularity and confusion in social and spiritual life were especially conspicuous; a time when the utter disharmony between right and wrong, and good and evil, was manifest with unusual conspicuity. In a very real sense the whole period was the hour and power of darkness; and it was a darkness all the deeper because it preceded the dawn of

a new and celestial day. The spiritual world was at that time a chaos, waiting for the subduing power of Him who ultimately will make it a cosmos. As a result of the predominance of spiritual evils at that time, we find a greater number of cases of possession by evil spirits than at any previous or subsequent period. It is not too much to say that all the powers of evil have been partially destroyed by the coming of the Son of God in the flesh. There is a sense in which Satan has literally fallen as lightning from heaven. His rage and violence, ever since the coming of Christ, have been much reduced. Missionaries in heathen lands have discovered remarkable activity among the powers of darkness when the Gospel of Christ is first preached. It is not surprising, therefore, that such ebullitions of evil should have been common when Christ introduced the opposing force of civic righteousness and personal holiness. We know that the brighter the light, the deeper are the shadows. Electric lights cast shadows which make the wire appear to be as large as a cable. When the light of God's Word is flashed upon the darkness of human sin, that darkness appears the denser, and every sin becomes exceeding sinful. The Word of God necessarily attacked by its mere presence, and especially in its aggressive and heavenly mission, every form of evil.

OPPOSING ATHEISM.

He who is the Prince of light and life necessarily came into violent contact with atheism and infidelity in all their forms. Atheism is the denial of the existence of God. It is a gigantic negation; it is a prodigious blunder; it is a monstrous crime. The word naturally has variant shades of meaning, according to the time in which it is used and the connection in which it is found. In its etymology atheism negatives theism. Much which in current thought is supposed to be mere pantheism and deism is at heart atheism. It has also a positive or dogmatic, as well as a negative or sceptical side. Positive intellectual atheism is comparatively rare; but practical atheism is sadly common. Indeed, it is doubtful if there ever was a really intelligent, intellectual atheist; but practical atheism, as illustrated by religious tenets which are held and by lives which are lived as if there were no God, is prevalent in great classes in every community. Many men shrink with genuine horror from being called atheists who yet live without God in the world. They are unwilling to bear the reproach which zealous believers of all ages invariably attach to those who dare deny and thus defy God. They cannot, however, escape the odium which must attach to their practice; it reveals their genuine denial of God's existence. Without doubt many who deny that God is know-

able as the first Cause of the universe really mean that God is not fathomable by their methods of inquiry. This view naturally leads to a region of darkness and despair. Atheism clips the wings of poetic genius; great poets are seldom atheists. Atheism never wrote a great hymn; it cannot compose immortal music. It generates an atmosphere in which no wing can loftily soar, and in which no noble life can truly breathe. As expounded by itinerant lecturers and disseminated by their pamphlets, it contaminates the minds of the thoughtful working classes, and is an evil of vast dimensions. Indeed, atheism is foreign to a properly constituted mind. It is accompanied always by denial, and denial presupposes an affirmation. The denial of God implies, in its very form, the existence of God. Atheism leads to anarchism; and anarchism is responsible for outbreaks against law and order in every country in which it controls a considerable number of followers. Few Americans realize the number of anarchists now in our country. If these men had their way, civil marriage would be abolished, and in its place would be what they call autonomistic marriage, or a simple partnership, binding only at the will of both parties. The Word of God necessarily opposes this system of unbelief. The very first sentence in the Bible assumes the existence of God. Atheism is essentially destructive, vulgar, and detestable. It, as already suggested, assumes va-

rious forms, at different times, in its opposition to revealed religion. The Bible must oppose it because it vigorously opposes the Bible.

It is said that when Paine wrote his "Age of Reason" he did not possess a Bible. Later he said: "I have gone up and down through the Christian's garden of Eden, and with my simple axe I have cut down one and another of its trees, until I have hardly left a single sapling standing." This boast was as silly as it was false. It was impossible for Paine to uproot the trees of truth which were planted by the hand of God. His works were published at a time when many influences combined to give them popularity and power. He possessed some qualities that were commendable, and was himself a sufferer because of his views. Strictly speaking, he was not an atheist. He wrote against Christianity and in favor of deism. But his day is over, and the Word of God which he despised still lives, endowed with divine life and resistless power. Voltaire was a man of different character, but his influence also has greatly waned. It would be virtually dead were it not that many of his ideas have been taken up by the so-called higher critics, revamped with modern phraseology, and started out under their patronage for a new but certainly brief career. Voltaire lived in the atmosphere of such English deists as Bolingbroke, Collins, Wollaston, and others. He vilified Shakespeare as a barbarous monster of a writer, declaring

that his works were intolerable to any man possessed of orthodox French taste. He was the most noted of the band of writers whose crusade against law, order, and religion prepared the way for the French Revolution. He, like Paine, was a deist rather than an atheist. Diderot and others abused him because they considered that his partial belief was an evidence of intellectual infirmity. He was a superb master of ridicule, and wrote with the most attractive graces of the French style. But this man has passed away, as must all others, of every rank and degree, who oppose God and His truth. The Bible has withstood every attack of infidelity in the past, and it bids defiance to every deistic and atheistic assault in the future.

OPPOSED TO POLYTHEISM.

The Bible is necessarily opposed to polytheism wherever it is found. Israel was long disposed to the idolatries of various surrounding nations. Not until after the Babylonish captivity did Israel fully overcome her idolatrous tendencies. That experience restored her fully to her theistic convictions—convictions from which she has never departed to this hour. Polytheism has appeared in all the nations of antiquity, and also in all those of modern times who are without the inspired revelation. By polytheism we understand the prevalence of belief in many gods. Often the word is used as a personification of natural forces or phenomena;

it is frequently employed in this sense in the classical mythologies. As far back as we can go, it is found that the rudest nations have had some form of polytheism, including in that term their worship of spirits. Traces of theism appear in the history of Balaam and Melchisedek. The nations with which the Jews came in contact not only worshipped many gods, but employed images in that worship, with the single exception of the followers of Zoroaster. Polytheism is by no means unknown to-day in many lands and among many people; it is the natural religion of savage tribes throughout the world. Only as men advance to purer conceptions of God do they advance in higher degrees of civilization.

Polytheism, therefore, everywhere disappears before the march of true civilization. The Bible is in conflict with polytheism at this hour in many lands. Gods many are worshipped in India, China, Japan, and many of the islands of the seas. One may see in Japan the worship of idols indicative of as much superstition as can be found in any part of the world. Indeed, the puerilities personally observed among the Japanese in the worship of their idol gods would excite laughter, did it not merit sincere pity. The Bible must move forward in its triumphant march until every idol deity is overthrown. The Roman heathen were willing that a statue of Christ should be erected in the Pantheon, but this proposition the early Chris-

tians utterly rejected. Christ could not share His honors with gods which are not gods. If His statue were erected, all other statues must be dethroned. The same law holds true to-day. The Bible demands that God, and He alone, be worshipped. The most strenuous efforts have been made at all periods in the history of heathenism to destroy the Word of God. It is opposed to the unrestrained license, superstitious ceremonies, and abominable practices of heathenism in all countries and centuries. Heathenism persecuted the early Christians, and made heroic efforts utterly to destroy the Bible. We have only to turn to the history of Diocletian to see how terrible was his opposition to the Word of God and the Church of Christ. In the early part of his reign he was reasonably favorable to both, but the influence of Cæsar Galerius, who bitterly detested the Scriptures and who thirsted for their destruction, led Diocletian to issue his severe edicts against them. During a period of ten years the condition of Christians was unspeakably severe. They were excluded from all public honors and offices; they were made liable to accusations of many kinds, and were powerless to secure legal redress. Nevertheless the Church of God lived and the Word of God triumphed. The Bible thus opposed the most cultured and the most powerful polytheists in the early days of Christianity. It also carried its conflicts and triumphs to Northern Europe, and over-

threw the mighty Odin, Thor, and all the gods of the Valhalla, even as it overthrew the gods of classic Greece and Rome. The names of the days of the week show the mighty hold which northern heathenism had in the days of its dominancy. Every day of the week, as the name of each implies, was dedicated to some form of heathen worship. We have retained the names, but we have destroyed the idols which once these names enshrined. Christianity has within the last half century hurled all the idols from their altars in the Hawaiian Islands. It is moving forward now to such conquests in nominally heathen lands as the Church has never seen since the days of the apostles.

The Bible is also opposed to pantheism. Pantheism identifies mind and matter. It unifies the finite and the infinite, making them simply manifestations of one universal Being. It is derived from two words, *pan*, all, and *theos*, God. It thus identifies the universe with God, and God with the universe. It declares that God is all, and that all is God. When it makes all God it becomes an exaggerated theism; when it declares that the "all" has absorbed God it becomes blank atheism. In its practical manifestations it is to all intents and purposes atheism. Without doubt the antiquity of pantheism is very great, as in some of its forms it was known in the earliest days of Hindu civilization. It has grown out of polytheism, which, as we have seen, is the instinctive creed of the most

primitive races. Greek pantheism, no doubt, had an origin similar to that of ancient pantheism, but it is more varied in form and more reasonable in method. Unfortunately pantheism has appeared frequently, at different stages in the development of Christianity. One can see how certain delightful and commendable spiritual characteristics may inhere in this doctrine, if it be held in connection with a firm belief in the existence of a personal God; but when so held it is inconsistent pantheism. Modern pantheism showed itself in Giordano Bruno, who was burnt at Rome in the year 1600. It has also appeared in Spinoza. He is perhaps the greatest of the whole class of pantheists produced either in the ancient or the modern world. It has had its forceful representatives of great distinction in Germany and France, in England and America. But, apart from Germany, none of these countries has yet produced a great pantheistic philosopher. If Ralph Waldo Emerson may be regarded as a pantheist, he is an exception to this statement; but his pantheism was theological rather than philosophical. Quite recently Christian Scientists have developed a shallow and unreasoning pantheism. It is almost amusing to hear men and women of most immature thought using the phrases in which lurk the germs of ancient pantheism. These unscientific religionists and irreligious scientists think they have discovered some new truths. Their fads are really the

discarded cults of the Orient. The Word of God opposes pantheism in whatever form it appears. Its errors seem to be anticipated, as are also those of materialism, polytheism, and atheism, in the first sublime sentence of the Bible. We are there told that God created the heavens and the earth. That sentence, as we have partially seen, denies atheism because it asserts God; it denies materialism, for it affirms creation; it denies pantheism, for it declares the personality of God. These *isms*, like all other philosophies and religions which are opposed to Jesus Christ, must one day be utterly overthrown. A true belief in the Word of God utterly overthrows all pantheistic notions of God, declaring not only His eternity and universality, but also His personality, with an emphasis which can neither be intelligently contradicted nor continuously resisted.

THE BIBLE AND AGNOSTICISM.

This is another and comparatively modern form of infidel teaching. The word is composed of two Greek words meaning *not* and *knowledge*. Agnosticism was the creed of a sect in the third century who held that God did not know all things. Now, however, an agnostic is one who holds the theory of nescience, or "no knowledge" on the part of men. Huxley practically introduced this word into modern nomenclature with its present significance. He tells us that most of his col-

leagues in the different societies to which he belonged were "ists" of some sort, while he was a man without a "rag of a label." He therefore invented, in its modern sense, the title *agnostic*. It seemed to him to be antithetical to *gnostic* as found in Church history. The agnostic does not really deny the existence of God, but he affirms that God is unknowable. What he probably really means is that God is not understandable. The agnostic teaches that knowledge is derived exclusively through the senses. All, therefore, which lies outside of the sphere of sense lies outside of the grasp of our faculties. Any subject which transcends the limitations of human experience cannot be understood and ought not to be believed. This school of thought seeks the middle ground in theology between that occupied by the dogmatic theist and the philosophical atheist. Its difference from atheism is only seeming; it pretends great modesty, but it virtually affirms that whatever cannot be thoroughly understood practically has no existence. It seems evident that agnosticism is losing its power. There is a dangerous gnosticism, but there is also a very blessed gnosticism. We rejoice to hear Job say, "I know," and the apostle Paul to echo, "I know," and the beloved John as he declares, "We know." The Word of God fully teaches that while God may not be fully comprehended, He certainly can be partially apprehended by every loving and devoted

disciple. There is a great deal of ground between the extremes of gnosticism and agnosticism. A word has been recently coined by Dr. Joseph Cook and the late Dr. McCosh which exactly expresses the idea. This word was suggested by the language of the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. xiii. 12, when he says, "Now I know in part." Awkward though this word may appear to the eye and may sound to the ear, it is an extremely useful word and will become common in the near future. The wise man is neither an agnostic nor a gnostic. Like the apostle Paul, he knows in part. He is therefore a "merognostic." This is the true attitude for all Christian believers to occupy. There are many things which now we do not know and cannot now know. The light, however, is growing brighter day by day. One day we shall know even as we are known. The dawn of that day hastens. Let us now frankly acknowledge that we know only in part—that we are merognostics. Standing on this ground we shall have common sense, practical experience, and divine revelation on our side.

THE BIBLE OPPOSES ISLAMISM.

This word is used in this connection as synonymous with Mohammedanism. The word itself is Arabic, implying submission, that is, submission to God. Cairo may be regarded as the capital of Mohammedanism, as the great university of this faith is located in that city.

Mohammedanism in its rise and progress, it must be admitted, was an illustration of the survival of the fitter. It came into contact with an utterly weak and worthless form of Christianity; and it was characterized by a remarkable degree of consecration to its principles and of zeal in their dissemination. It swept like wildfire over great portions of territory, and soon secured millions of believers. Islamism holds that it was once the religion of all men, but after sin had been introduced idolatry for a time triumphed. Mohammed was a man of marvellous power, whatever may be said of his honesty and morality. His religion is a combination of Judaism, paganism, and Christianity. The trinity of Mohammedanism is Moses, Christ, and Mohammed. The Koran contains much that is admirable, and more that is abominable. Within thirty-six years after the death of Mohammed, Islamism was clamoring at Constantinople for entrance into Europe. But for the discovery of that bituminous compound called "Greek fire," Islamism would then have entered Europe, and would have swept over continents and seas, and might to-day be the religion of Great Britain and America. In 711 Mohammedanism, defeated at the East, entered Europe through the Straits of Gibraltar. But for its terrific defeat at Tours, Mohammedanism would have had one more opportunity of sweeping over all Europe, and finally America as well. It thundered before the gates of

Vienna, and its crescent now gleams from the lofty dome of St. Sophia in Constantinople. Without doubt Mr. William Walters is right in declaring that the Sepoy rebellion of 1857 was one of the fruits of the implacable enmity of Mohammedanism toward Christianity. To-day it numbers its followers by hundreds of millions; but there are signs that the crescent is waning before the cross, and that the words of Christ, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me," are being fulfilled.

It would be proper in this connection to speak of the conflicts of the Bible with papalism and with Satanism in all the varied forms of their manifestations; but that discussion will appear in a slightly different form in a later chapter. Let us stand with undaunted hearts beside the cross of the crucified Christ. That cross has beaten down philosophies hoary with age and honored by learning. It has been carried in triumph over the rocky hills of Palestine, and from island to island of the sea, until now it is erected in almost all the lands under heaven. God's Word will go forward on its heroic and triumphant career until every error is overthrown and truth is established in every land. Christ has girded His sword upon His thigh—the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And that sword will never be sheathed until every form of error is destroyed, and truth in all its symmetry, beauty, and divinity is established throughout the earth.

THE SUGGESTIVE SCIENTISM OF
THE BIBLE.

XVI.

THE SUGGESTIVE SCIENTISM OF THE BIBLE.

THE Bible was not written as a text-book of science, as that term is usually understood. As a matter of fact, the term science is often unduly limited. There is no reason in the nature of the case why that term should be so generally limited to what are known as the physical sciences. There is a science of language, a science of history, and a science of literature, as truly as there is physical science. Science deals with phenomena, and the term may rightly be applied to many departments of human thought and life. Science is knowledge; it is comprehension or understanding of any system of truths or facts. It covers a wide field of mental activity, in whatever department that activity may be manifested. There is, however, a science with which the word of God is intimately connected—the noblest, sublimest, and divinest of all sciences, the *science of salvation*.

But while the Bible is especially concerned with that science, it touches most interestingly and suggestively many lines of thought and systems of fact which have been organized into modern sci-

ence. There is in the Bible a wonderful degree of knowledge touching mysterious physical phenomena which have been but recently reduced to the formulas of scientific knowledge. It is simply remarkable that the Bible has so frequently anticipated the conclusions of the most authoritative modern scientists; and it is impossible to explain this anticipation except on the hypothesis of divine guidance in the record found in the Bible. There is space in this chapter simply to touch upon some of these remarkable anticipations of modern discovery, as these anticipations are recorded on the inspired page.

COSMOGONIC SCIENCE.

In no department of human inquiry have inspired writers shown greater diversity of thought and puerility of expression than they have in their cosmogonical statements. Cosmogony is the science of the origin or creation of the universe; it is the doctrine of the formation of the world. It has been a favorite study both of ancient and modern times. It is fitting that the methods of modern science should be applied to all the notions of cosmogony that were cherished and formulated by ancient writers. Many of these notions are laughable in the extreme. We are gravely told by uninspired cosmogonists that men rested upon the earth, and that the earth rested upon a huge turtle;

but these wise cosmogonists thoughtlessly fail to tell us on what the huge turtle rests. This is a most unpardonable oversight on their part. They have also told us that the sea is a majestic whale, leviathan, or other aquatic monster, and the tides of the sea they attributed to the breathing of this enormous creature thus evolved from their own vivid and untrained imagination. The cosmogony of the Hindus is among the most extravagant and monstrous. The cosmogony of Hesiod is one of the earliest outside of the Bible. This was delivered in verse, and it served as the groundwork of many of the speculations of later Greek philosophers. The cosmogony of Homer is poetical and beautiful, and it represented the popular views of the Greek people regarding these mysterious subjects. The Ionic philosophers, including Thales, Anaximenes, Anaximander, and Anaxagoras, are among the most celebrated of the ancient world. The view of Ovid bears a striking resemblance to the Mosaic account of creation; indeed, so marked is the similarity as to suggest that it was derived by tradition from that account. There are three great views among the ancients regarding the origin of the world. One represents the world as eternal in form as well as substance; another represents all matter as eternal, but the form as having been assumed at some historic epoch; and the third, that of the sacred Scriptures, attributes the origin of the world to a spiritual cause, or divine

Creator. The first two have endless variations in their substance and statement. They differ according to the country and century in which they are found; that of the Egyptians differs widely from that of the northern nations; and so we shall find that differences existed according to the nations whose cosmogonies we may study.

Modern science brings many of these ancient cosmogonies into indescribable ridicule. That same modern science does not show that any one statement in the cosmogony of Moses, the cosmogony of the Bible, is untrue to the acknowledged facts of modern science. This is a fact of great significance. It tells in a remarkable way in favor of the Bible as the inspired Word of God. How came its writers to be so wonderfully preserved from error? How came they to be so much wiser than writers of countries containing great philosophers, learned historians, and immortal poets? If we deny the divine inspiration of the Bible, how can we explain the fact that neither the Hindu Shasters, nor any heathen cosmogony whatever, can for a moment bear such comparison as does that of the Bible with the results of modern science? Why is it that some of the most remarkable discoveries have been so fully, so accurately, and so sublimely anticipated by the statements of the old Bible, which many persons with their shallow knowledge and in a spirit of hostile criticism hold up to the contempt of the world?

Such persons take unnecessary pains to advertise their own ignorance.

Read in Job xxvi. 7, "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." These are wonderful words. In this chapter Job begins to reply to all that had been said by his three friends. Beginning with the fifth verse of this chapter, and going through to end of the fourteenth, he gives a statement of the power, majesty, and glory of the Almighty, and thus he showed his friends that he was not possessed of any low or grovelling conceptions of God, but that he could use language as lofty as their own in the description of God's power and character. He could even surpass his friends in his views of God's majesty and glory. It is in this connection and for this purpose that he utters the seventh verse of this great chapter. Job's poem as a whole gives deeply interesting views of the cosmogony which prevailed in that remote time and mysterious land. The references which he makes to astronomy, geography, and to many arts which are mentioned in the book of Job add greatly to its value. Nowhere else can we get information so extensive, so accurate, and so effective on these subjects as in this dramatic poem. By the *north*, in the verse, he seems to mean the north pole, or the heavens as they seem to revolve around that pole. Possibly he conceived of the earth as a vast extended plain, and of the heavens

as poised above it. The heavens are thus represented as being stretched out, and they are sustained by the power of God. Milton finely expresses a similar thought in the words:

"The earth is balanced, from her centre hung."

It is not affirmed in this lecture that Job was familiar with the globularity or sphericity of the earth; and perhaps he was not familiar with the diurnal and annual revolution of the earth. But he certainly conceived of it as lying on the vacant air, and so maintained by the power of God. There are, indeed, passages in some of the classical writers which suggest that hints of the true figure of the earth flashed through their minds; but these hints were not supported by sufficient evidence to establish a general law or to create a uniform belief. The marvel is that the description given by Job should be appropriate to the scientific facts of to-day. Job, writing to-day, with all the knowledge of astronomy now possessed by astronomical scientists, could not have used language more scientifically correct than that which he employed in the passage quoted from his poem. He could not better have set forth his conception of the majesty of God. God truly "hangeeth the earth upon nothing"; the planets and the vast sun hang upon nothing; and in that position God sustains these heavenly bodies, and governs this mighty universe. Why do we not find in Job the puerilities about the turtle? Why not the

childish babble about the sea being a great monster? How comes it to pass that he describes this terraqueous globe as neither resting upon pillars nor hanging upon an axle? How comes it to pass, except on the supposition of the inspiration of the Word of God, that Job represents the world as firmly held in its place while it hangs upon nothing? No man could hang even a feather upon nothing. How then does God hang the whole earth upon nothing? And how comes it to pass that Job knew that God so hung the earth? Explain, O ye critics, who deny divine inspiration and superhuman wisdom to the writers of this glorious book! Account if you will for Job's modern knowledge in that ancient time. We know not with absolute certainty who Job was, neither do we know the country in which he lived, nor the century in which he wrote. And yet here we have him making statements regarding mysterious scientific matters with as much accuracy as if he made them to-day, in the light of all the knowledge of thousands of years. Here stands God. Here appears conclusively, conspicuously, and divinely Job's heavenly wisdom, his matchless knowledge, and his divine-human inspiration.

HARVEY ANTICIPATED.

When we turn to Proverbs iv. 23, we have these words: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Here again we

have a statement which challenges our thought and commands our respect. We are counselled "above all keeping" to guard the heart. This is sound advice. Every observant man knows how apt the affections are to go astray. The reason is assigned for keeping the heart above all other keeping—"for out of it are the issues of life." The Hebrew is here remarkably suggestive, *totsoth chayim*; literally translated it is, "the goings out of lives." This is striking language. Its appropriateness is recognized to-day in the bright light which modern science has shed on the whole subject of physiology and anatomy. Discoveries touching this science are the most marked of our time. The discovery of the circulation of the blood has made William Harvey immortal. He was born at Folkestone, Kent, England, on April 1st, 1578. His father was a sturdy yeoman. He himself was one of nine children, and five of his brothers became London merchants of considerable wealth and of acknowledged worth. When sixteen years of age, Harvey was matriculated at Caius College, Cambridge. His degree in arts was taken in 1597. The University of Padua was then the most celebrated school of medicine in the world, and thither Harvey went, upon his graduation, to study his profession. Five years he spent in this university, under the instruction of the most eminent men in the profession of medicine. In 1602 he received his doctor's diploma, and re-

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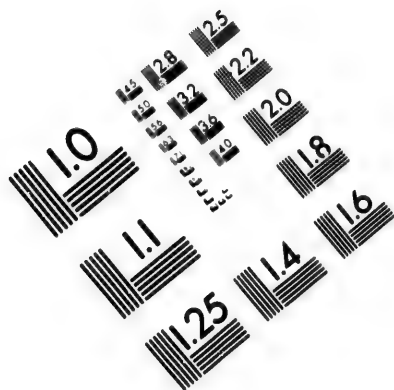
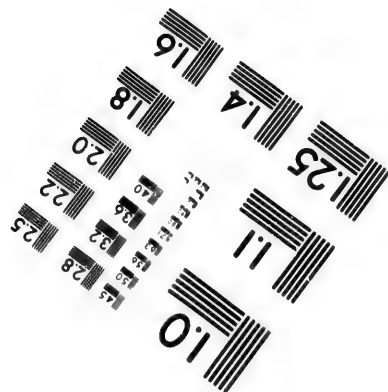
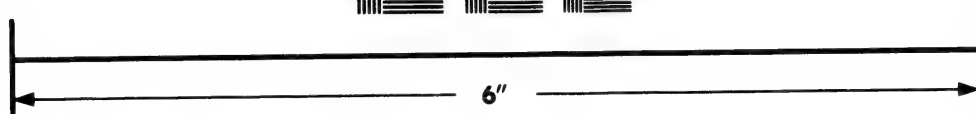
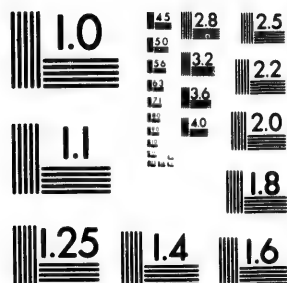
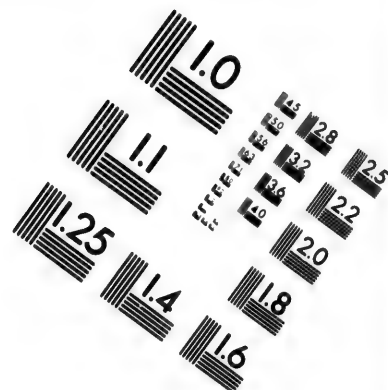
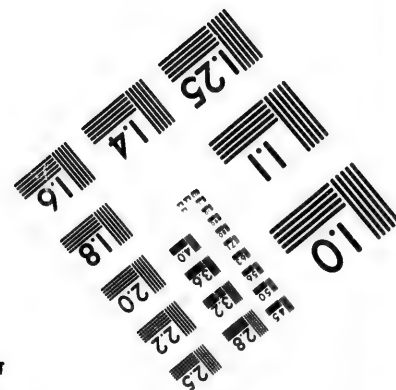


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turned to England in the same year. Cambridge also gave him the doctor's degree. He then settled in London as a physician. In 1615 he was Lumleian lecturer at the College of Physicians. He was also appointed a physician to St. Bartholomew's Hospital. His first course of lectures was delivered in 1616, the year in which Shakespeare died, and about that time he suggested and explained those theories of the circulation of the blood which have made his name a household word in every civilized land. In 1619 he gave some publicity to his views, but it was not until 1628 that he gave them fully to the world. In the mean time he had freed his argument from the objections raised by the most skilful anatomists. He was appointed physician extraordinary to James I., and in 1632 to Charles I. In 1636 he publicly demonstrated to Caspar Hofman, the distinguished professor of Nuremberg, and one of the chief opponents of his views, the foundations upon which they rested. He died in his eightieth year, June 3d, 1657. He expressed frankly his indebtedness to one of his former instructors, Fabricius, for his discovery. It appears certain that Cæsalpinus, who died at Rome about the time that Harvey left Italy, distinctly expressed, in one of his works, his conviction as to the circulation of the blood. But it is equally true that beyond the inductive method of research practised by his Paduan professors and some re-

sults to which that method led, and their discovery of the valves in the veins, the credit of discovering the circulation of the blood undoubtedly belongs to Harvey. In this case, as in the case of almost all discoveries, many men had their attention directed about the same time to the results which some one of them would give to the world. As early as the time of Linacre physicians knew that the blood was not stagnant in the body. Homer knew this; so did every augur who inspected the entrails of a victim. Plato uses expressions implicative of this knowledge; so does Shakespeare. But they had no conception of a continuous stream flowing from the heart and returning to its source. This discovery, the true circulation, Harvey made; and this the Bible anticipated. He for a time experienced the treatment which is given to all inventors or discoverers, and was looked upon with suspicion by many and with contempt by some. But he enjoyed the intimacy of kings and of such men as Bacon, Hobbes, Cowley, and other persons of great note in England, and he lived to be considered the first anatomist and physician of his time, and to see his discoveries acknowledged by the ablest physicians throughout the civilized world.

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HARVEY AND SOLOMON.

We give all honor to William Harvey; not one laurel would we pluck from the wreath which crowns his brow. But we are obliged to say that in this passage in Proverbs, as well as in some passages in the Epistles, and in still other parts of the Bible, Harvey's discovery was anticipated by inspired writers. This passage is a plain allusion to the arteries and to their functions in carrying the blood from the heart to the utmost extremities of the body. The heart is the secret source of power. So long as it is capable of receiving and propelling the blood, just so long will at least a reasonable degree of health be enjoyed. When the heart fails to discharge these functions, life must speedily end. Nothing in all the universe is more wonderful than the heart within our bodies. All the blood passes through it. It is stated that in a state of health the heart contracts itself at least sixty times in a minute, and consequently thirty-six hundred times in an hour; and that at each beat of the pulse it throws out about two ounces of blood, so that there passes through the heart every hour about three hundred and fifty pounds of blood. In order to throw out this quantity of blood so that it shall reach as far as two feet into the great arteries, the heart must resist a weight of twelve thousand six hundred pounds. This marvellous instrument keeps on beating,

whether we wake or sleep, for eighty or one hundred or more years. We are brought into a kind of human sympathy with the throbbing engine in one of our great ocean steamers, as it throbs night and day for six or seven or eight consecutive days. But here is this wonderful mechanism within our own bodies performing its marvellous functions every second for threescore years and ten and more. Truly we are fearfully, wonderfully, and gloriously made. The term "heart failure" is a convenient phrase to cover a multitude of sins as well as a great degree of ignorance.

Just as the heart is the fountain whence all the issues of life proceed, so the greatest care must be taken that it be preserved in its normal condition. It is not otherwise in spiritual things. The heart is the seat of the affections; the heart ought to be the throne of Jesus Christ. All the streams of spiritual activity must proceed from Him; all the faculties of the soul, when spiritually it is in good condition, show that God is in immediate control. We must, therefore, watch with the utmost care that this fountain and its connecting veins are kept in workable order. If the heart be pure and holy all its purposes will be just and good; if it be defiled, impure, nothing can proceed from it but evil, and that continually. Well may the Scriptures exhort us in the words, "Son, give Me thy heart."

Once more we may well ask, How came Solo-

mon to be so wise as to anticipate the discovery of Harvey? How came Moses to be an authority in sanitary science as well as in cosmological knowledge? Medical science to-day, in certain important respects, has not reached the high point attained by Moses thousands of years ago. How can men explain these facts if they deny the inspiration of the writers of Holy Scripture? These are scientific facts; they are not the speculations of a pulpit exegete. The time has come when atheism should be discreetly silent, or should honestly give glory to God, honor to His Word, and reverence to Jesus Christ as the world's greatest Teacher.

THE CIRCLE OF THE EARTH.

In Isaiah xl. 22 we read: "It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, . . . that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." These are instructive words by the rapt prophet Isaiah. How came he to speak of the *circle* of the earth? Let us look for a moment at his meaning and at the connection in which his words stand. We know that in most Oriental countries it is common to have courts within the houses; and we know that in those countries it is not uncommon for streets to be sheltered from the sun during the hottest hours of the day. A *velum* (veil or awning) is stretched across on ropes from wall to wall. This

is the fact which probably Isaiah had in mind in the language which he uses in the latter part of this verse. The firmament above is thought of as stretched out, expanded over our heads, as a curtain or veil, forming a sort of tent. A similar expression occurs in Psalm civ. 2. God is there referred to as stretching out the heavens like a curtain. We know that the houses of most Orientals are constructed with a court in the centre. Houses so constructed may still be seen in Spain and in the countries which formerly were Spain's colonies, and in other lands. This court, or open square, has in it fountains and flowers. The fountains splash, giving an air of coolness and beauty; and the flowers fill the space with a perfumed atmosphere. Any one who has visited some of the best hotels or homes in Spain, and who has enjoyed a "siesta" in one of these courts, will readily recall the sweet picture, and will at once see the harmony between these memories and the suggestions of the passage from Isaiah. In the artificial coolness of these courts the family sit, and when the weather is very hot or rainy an awning is drawn over this court area. So Isaiah thought of the heavens as extended like a tent; and here, in this beautiful pavilion, God had His dwelling-place.

But special attention is now called to the first part of the verse. The Hebrew literally meant "the sitter" or "he that sitteth on the circle of the earth." Perhaps the thought goes back to the

twenty-first verse, as if Isaiah had said, "Have ye not known Him who sitteth on the circle of the earth?" The phrase beautifully sets forth the majesty and glory of God. God is represented as a mighty sovereign making the earth His august throne. It is of importance, then, in our inquiry that we should get a definite conception of what is meant by the words "the circle of the earth." The word translated *circle* properly means circle, sphere, or arch. In Proverbs viii. 27 and Job xxii. 14 it is translated with that meaning. Perhaps the phrase is here used in the sense of the Latin term *orbis terrarum*, referring to the earth as an extended plain surrounded by mighty waters. It is not claimed in this discussion that Isaiah meant definitely to express his belief that the earth was a sphere. Perhaps he had no exact knowledge of the earth's sphericity. Perhaps he held the opinion of the majority of the men of his time, that the earth was a great plain. More than once he speaks of "the ends of the earth," meaning the earth itself, conceived of as a vast plain having well-defined boundaries. Probably this was the prevailing opinion among the ancients. It is, however, here affirmed that Isaiah used language in harmony with the idea of the sphericity of the earth, and thus anticipated the discoveries of a much later day; he thus used language not only not opposed to these discoveries, but language exactly in harmony with these discoveries. He used

terms in which clearly lies the germ of all these scientific discoveries and conclusions. Suppose Isaiah had employed language which contradicted these discoveries. How all the little infidels and the puny agnostics would exclaim in their derision of his ignorance! Why, then, do they not honestly lift their stridulous voices in acknowledgment of the accuracy of his phraseology? Why are they not manly enough to give him credit for his anticipations of modern discoveries? How came he to use language so accordant with the most advanced ideas of our time on these subjects, when the cosmogonies of uninspired peoples excite only prolonged and well-nigh uncontrollable laughter? Whence did this glowing, rapt, seraphic Hebrew prophet derive this remarkable wisdom? Who gave him such understanding? How came he not only to be free from error in his use of language, but to employ terms which suggest the sublime truths of later scientific discovery? There again stands God.

The merit of having first formed the general notion of the Copernican system seems to be due to Pythagoras, but Copernicus really has the credit of having again drawn the attention of philosophers to it after the lapse of centuries, and of having increased the probability of its truth by his experiments and arguments. But the full glory of having matured its sublime truth belongs to Kepler, Galileo, and others, and especially to the immortal

Newton. His discoveries connected with the law of gravitation demonstrated the truth of the broader laws of the Copernican system. Certainly Isaiah knew nothing of Copernicus and his great discoveries. The clergy in the days of Copernicus, and astronomers generally, rejected his theories. How came Isaiah to be wiser than the clergymen and astronomers of comparatively recent centuries? Certainly Isaiah knew nothing of the laws of gravitation as they have been formulated by Sir Isaac Newton. Newton showed that the same force which causes a stone to fall extends to the moon and holds her in her orbit. He showed that the planets tend to fall toward the sun, the satellites toward the planets, and the moon toward the earth, and that all these tendencies are in harmony with the law by which an apple falls to the ground. He did not, indeed, discover gravitation, for it was known from the earliest days; but he applied and formulated the law in harmony with these tendencies. He finally enunciated the greatest law of nature ever discovered: "Every body in nature attracts every other body with a force directly as its mass, and inversely as the square of its distance." These are sublime discoveries of comparatively modern days. We fully recognize their utility and rejoice in their sublimity.

Apart from the beautiful harmony between Isaiah's words and the latest conclusions of modern science, there is majesty in his words in their

relation to God. The inhabitants of the earth, numerous and mighty as they are, he represents as nothing compared with the great God. The Exalted One is so exalted, so glorious, and so divine that from His lofty throne He looks down upon the inhabitants of the world, busy, excited creatures as they often are, looks down upon them as if they were interminable bands of locusts spread over the vast plains of the mysterious and majestic East. These are truly sublime descriptions of the greatness of God, and striking conceptions of the insignificance of man. We may well ask in the presence of such words, in the language of the Psalmist, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" But we remember, also, in the words of the same psalm, that God has "made him a little lower than the angels, and has crowned him with glory and honor." Let all atheism be dumb in the presence of the great God! This mighty Being is our Father, our Friend, our Redeemer. With bowed head and uplifted heart let us give Him the homage that is His due, as Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of this great globe, as in august majesty He "sitteth upon the circle of the earth."

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THE ARTISTIC INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE.

XVII.

THE ARTISTIC INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE.

IN speaking of the relation between the Bible and the fine arts, music, the noblest of all the fine arts, would naturally be included in any category that might be given. But music is so important in itself, and also in its relation to the Bible, which gives it celestial inspiration, and to which it, in turn, gives impressive expression, that an entire chapter will be devoted to the influence of the Bible upon music. The thought in this chapter, therefore, will be limited, in speaking of the artistic influence of the Bible, to painting and sculpture.

We can well indorse the language of Cowper in relation to painting when he says :

" Blest be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles time's tyrannic claims
To quench it."

We can readily see, also, how great an influence the Bible has exercised over some of the greatest masters of this noble art in the production of their masterpieces. A few general remarks, however, on the subject of painting as a whole, and in illustration of the development of this high art, will be

in order. We may define painting as the act or art of representing on a flat surface by means of lines and colors various objects, so as to convey ideas and excite emotions. Ruskin calls painting a noble and expressive language, but of itself nothing, although invaluable as the vehicle of thought. There must, therefore, be a valuable thought lying back of the representation on canvas or other material in order that the representation itself may be worthy of our appreciation or even of our consideration. Some critics affirm that painting occupies, as combining with light and shade and color, the chief place in the fine arts. This, however, is an estimate which a sober second thought will not indorse. It must be admitted that as compared with music and poetry, painting lacks the element of movement—an element whose presence is essential to the highest form of art. In its most elementary forms painting must be considered one of the oldest of the arts. Certainly it is older than writing, and it will also be readily acknowledged that as a vehicle for expressing thought in vivid and enduring forms it possesses great advantages over writing. No description can convey so striking an impression as does a pictorial representation. Painting has a great advantage over many of the arts in that it is not limited by differences of language, but speaks in more or less forceful degrees to all nations, whatever be their language and whatever their degree

of civilization. Even the most illiterate can interpret, in some measure, the thought of a picture; those with artistically trained minds and eyes can, of course, get vastly more out of a picture than those lacking these qualities. To the unartistic it may be little more than so much paint and canvas, while to those who are sympathetic and artistic it may represent the noblest thought even of the divine Raphael. But the painting will have a language even for those who are entirely uneducated. There is no doubt but that illustrations in the comic papers have controlled more than one Presidential election. In one noted case, at least, one principal representation of a Presidential candidate did much toward securing his defeat. A former "boss" in New York city feared the representations of these papers far more than he did the most caustic editorials which the press ever published.

Remains discovered in Egypt show that the origin of painting is of great antiquity. As early at least as nineteen centuries before Christ, the halls and temples of Thebes were decorated by painting and sculpture. We know that Ezekiel prophesied about six hundred years before Christ, and he refers to paintings in Jerusalem in imitation of those of the Babylonians and the Chaldeans. Many references show that paintings of the highest excellence were executed in Greece at a very early date. Discoveries in the ruins of Pompeii, where the in-

fluence of Greek art was great, show the regard paid in classic times to the art of painting. Many of these remains reflect most damagingly on the moral taste of the people who were buried in that doomed city; but they remain to this hour testifying alike to artistic skill and to moral depravity. The chief schools were in Corinth, Athens, and Rhodes; and the first great artist, according to high authority, of whose works there is any authentic description, is Polygnotus of Thasos. The works of Apollodorus of Athens, Zeuxis his pupil, Eupompus, Parrhasius, and Timanthes, and others carried the art to a high degree of perfection, and made it conspicuous down to the time of Philip, the father of Alexander the Great.

But the greatest master of ancient painters, as is well known to all students of this art, was Apelles, the son of Pythias, who probably was born at Colophon on the Ionian coast of Asia Minor, although some authorities name other locations as his birthplace. His ideal portrait of Alexander wielding a thunderbolt exercised no little influence in the development of Alexander's character; this portrait was preserved in the temple of Diana at Ephesus. Alexander is reported to have said concerning it: "There are only two Alexanders, the invincible son of Philip and the inimitable Alexander of Apelles." He flourished in the latter half of the fourth century before Christ. His contemporary and rival was Protogenes of Rhodes.

The Etruscans followed the art at a very early period in Italy. Their finest specimens are paintings on tombs, and the remains of armor and fictile ware ornamented with various figures. These show the influence of Greek art in the development of Etruscan taste and method. It is not a little remarkable that no great school of classic art flourished thus early in Rome. Many of the chief adornments of Roman palaces were the work of Greek artists, or Roman artists working under the influence of Greek masters, as is well known. When the seat of empire was carried to Byzantium, the earlier art came to be recognized as Byzantine art.

The influence of Christianity on painting came to be marked in Italy as early as the thirteenth century. It was powerfully illustrated in Germany, especially in the fourteenth century. In the next century we have the name of Albert Dürer, "the prince of artists," as he has been called, and others entitled to fame. The English school was later in origin and slower in development. There has been a distinct American school of painting since the year 1825, when Thomas Cole originated what is known as the American school of landscape painting. His views on the Hudson find a ready market, and his allegorical pieces are still more famous. They are well known in America and in Europe as charming representations of natural scenery characterized by boldness and beauty.

BIBLICAL ART.

We are at present especially concerned with the development of Bible art, showing as it does the powerful influence of Bible teaching, ideals, and inspiration on the minds of the greatest artists. Indeed, the greater the artist the more conspicuously does the influence of the Bible appear in his noblest compositions. The greatest painters of every country show alike in conception and execution the influence of the Bible on their masterpieces. Raphael's cartoons, Transfiguration and Madonna, are sufficient to immortalize him in the land of his birth and throughout the civilized world. He has been called by his countrymen *Il Divino*—"the divine." We can scarcely look at his own portrait without being impressed with the propriety of this designation. The finest specimens of his cartoons now in existence are those at Hampton Court. They were sent first to Flanders, that they might be copied in tapestry; but the tapestries are far inferior to the original designs. One set of these copies is now in Rome, and the other was purchased from England and carried by a Spanish ambassador to Spain. The cartoons at Hampton Court were purchased by Rubens for King Charles I. These cartoons are striking commentaries on important Scripture narratives, and although not always entirely accurate, are suggestive and strik-

ing. As his Transfiguration was his greatest, so also it was his last work. In order that his genius might find its highest inspiration, it was necessary for him to climb the Mount of Transfiguration and catch the heavenly light which fell upon Christ and His disciples. Raphael died on the thirty-seventh anniversary of his birthday—that being a fatal birthday with many men of genius—and this painting, not yet completed, was carried to his grave at his burial. It represents Christ soaring above the earth and swimming in glory, Moses with the tables of the law on one side, Elijah on the other; and the three disciples, just aroused from sleep, partly blinded by the dazzling light, are at their feet. The painting has been criticised because it represents the maniacal boy and his troubled father with the disciples on the mountain-side. The point of the criticism is that this scene was distant in time and place from the transfiguration. But the union of the two is an illustration of remarkable genius on the part of Raphael. He did not wish to leave the side of the mountain unoccupied and barren, and he wished also and chiefly to teach that the disciples had a duty in the plain below in healing the lunatic boy after they had received transfiguration blessings on the mountain above.

In this Bible gallery we must, of course, see Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment." This is a work of resistless power. Its solemn teaching no

beholder can entirely resist. Angelo, when in the zenith of his power, was almost unrivalled as painter, sculptor, and architect. He might have been famous in either of these great arts, and in the union of the three he possessed an unapproachable fame. He was as lofty in genius as he was noble in origin. This great picture of "The Last Judgment" was painted for the hall of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. This colossal fresco is nearly seventy feet in height, and in its production he surpassed all his former works, alike in his power of invention and his consummate knowledge of the human form divine. But for the inspiration of the Bible this great work would have been an utter impossibility. Neither can we be indifferent to Correggio's "*Notte*"—Night. The charm in this remarkable picture is that it represents the light as raying out from the Child Jesus; the entire scene is lighted only by the celestial splendor beaming from the head of the infant Redeemer.

In this gallery of Bible paintings we cannot pass over Guido Reni's "Crucifixion." This is in the church of San Lorenzo in Rome. It represents fervent spiritualism, and fixes indelibly upon the mind of the beholder this most awful scene in the life of our divine Lord. Carlo Dolce's "Christ Blessing the Bread and Wine" and "Christ on the Mount of Olives" bring our Lord before us in blended human tenderness and divine majesty. This painter was filled with the thought of Christ's

tenderness and love, and that characteristic appears in all his works. No one who has ever seen Murillo's "Moses Striking the Rock," "Abraham and the Angels," and especially his famous "Immaculate Conception" can ever forget the vision of his artistic genius. He was born at Seville, Spain, and in the Royal Gallery in Madrid no fewer than sixty-one of his famous works are exhibited, and one hundred and five of his paintings are in galleries in London. The "Immaculate Conception" is now in the Louvre, it having been bought in 1852 for \$120,000.

Rubens' "Descent from the Cross" fixes forever in the mind of every beholder that sad scene. He was one of the greatest of Flemish painters, and is the acknowledged head of the Flemish school. He combines energetic action with breadth of thought and brilliancy of color to a remarkable and harmonious degree. It is not necessary to speak at length of Da Vinci's "Last Supper," painted in oil on the wall of the refectory in Milan, of Titian's "Tribute Money," Tintoretto's "Crucifixion," West's "Death on the Pale Horse," "Christ Healing the Sick," Martin's "Belshazzar's Feast," Eastlake's "Lament over Jerusalem," Holman Hunt's "Light of the World," Doré's "Christ Leaving the Pretorium," Ary Scheffer's "Christ Bearing His Cross," "Christ the Consolator," and "Christ the Remunerator," nor of the wonderful series of paintings by Tissot recently

exhibited in America. Benjamin West, of whom mention has just been made, was born in Pennsylvania, of Quaker parentage. He was the first American artist ever seen in Italy, and he naturally attracted much attention. He was buried in London in 1820, with great pomp, in St. Paul's cathedral.

The fact is that the Bible is greatly honored in the greatest picture galleries of the world. It would be quite impossible to understand many of the noblest productions of human genius were we not familiar with the Bible narrative. The Bible gave these men their inspiration. It placed before them their high ideals, and drawn by artistic genius combined with spiritual emotion these artists wrought, embodying their highest thought, and crowning the Christ of God with honor and glory. It is a remarkable fact that William Bowyer, an eminent English printer and classical scholar, spent thirty years of his life in illustrating the Bible. He procured engravings and other drawings referring to Bible subjects, and interleaved them in an edition of the Bible. Mr. Walters tells us that the work extended to forty-seven volumes and embraced seven thousand subjects. Mr. Bowyer, who was nominated Printer of the Rolls of the House of Lords, died in 1777, having spent much of his later leisure hours in the delightful occupation of showing how art has drawn its inspiration from the Bible, and how it has honored the

Bible with the divinest illustrations of its noblest genius. Great painters have evermore seen how their art is made immortal by drawing their subjects of inspiration from the Holy Book. It is marvellous that many students of art admire the artistic stream, while they affect to despise the Bible as the artistic fountain whence these streams have flowed.

A much longer list of great painters might be given, all of whom have drawn their subjects from, and ever found their ideals in the word of God. But the list given is sufficient to show the powerful influence exercised by the Bible on one of the noblest arts of ancient or modern life.

SCULPTURE AND THE BIBLE.

Painting and sculpture are sister arts. They are closely related in origin, atmosphere, inspiration, and achievement. They are worthy of being placed side by side in this discussion, as both so largely draw their inspiration from the Bible. Greece in the palmy days of its classic fame exercised a remarkable influence on the development of sculpture in all succeeding ages. It is frankly admitted that the Bible did not exercise so great an influence on sculpture as on painting; for the influence of Greek ideals has been felt on sculpture as related to Christian art. The Greeks excelled in producing in marble the human form,

and no other nation has ever been able even to approximate their highest achievements. Greece made the most careful studies in this respect ever made by any nation. Her whole social system tended to the development of physical strength and beauty. The aim of her social and medical science was not to restore to health and strength feeble children; they were permitted to die in order that only the strongest and finest might survive. God made the Greeks great sculptors simply under the inspiration of nature; but any student of the art can discover that these classic artists fail in giving to their work the loftiest sentiment, as Christian ideals have ennobled that sentiment. The Greeks had a fine eye and a deft hand for physical beauty, with an exquisite appreciation for all its sensuous charms. Their figures seem almost to breathe the breath of life. The story of Pygmalion and his bride is scarcely a myth. This legendary king and celebrated statuary of Cyprus might almost be considered, in the fable which gives life to the beautiful ivory statue of a maiden which he had made, as being but the incarnation of the perfection of Grecian art. But that art had no high moral feeling; it ministered chiefly to voluptuous desire. It did not exalt the soul with noble ideas of moral purity and goodness. It is doubtful whether the Greeks in this regard were in any degree in advance of the people of Nineveh, Egypt, and other great nations of antiquity

who made remarkable progress in sculpture. Art was not associated with religion or morals. Great as were Phidias and Praxiteles, they needed the refining and elevating atmosphere in which Angelo and Canova did their noble work and won their enduring fame.

When the immortal sculptors turned aside from classic models, they went to the Bible for their subjects and their ideals. We now enter upon a new era in the history and influence of sculpture; we now come to the great ennoblement of this exalted art. We now see that sculpture has spiritual and moral beauty, such as it never had in the days of its highest classical attainment. Let us enter this hall of Biblical sculpture. We behold at once Ghiberti's "Sacrifice of Isaac" and also his "Gates of Paradise." Michael Angelo gave Ghiberti the noble tribute of admiration regarding the gates to the baptistery of Florence by saying that they were worthy of paradise. We have here also Donatello's "St. Peter and St. Mark," Angelo's immortal "Moses," Canova's "Penitent Magdalen," and Thorwaldsen's "Christ and the Apostles." Without doubt Thorwaldsen was one of the greatest of modern sculptors; without education to any great degree, he won by his artistic genius the enthusiastic indorsement of the ablest artists of his day and a royal reception in Copenhagen, as well as the affection of his nation and of lovers of art throughout the world. He

was moved by Christian ideals, and his whole soul responded to the exaltation with which these ideals enabled him to conceive and to execute his immortal works.

These are but a few of the many illustrations which can readily be given of how the Bible has influenced sculptors and painters of the loftiest genius. We see at every instance the refining, ennobling, and sweetening influence of the Word of God and the life of Christ on the minds and hearts of these sons of genius, these disciples of art and masters of fame. Their noblest inspirations came from the presence of Christ in their work. The Bible was their most valuable and valued text-book; and at the feet of Jesus Christ they laid their highest artistic wreaths of triumph. In all departments of human effort the noblest genius should be stimulated to its highest and divinest work as it finds its inspiration in the school of Jesus Christ. It is difficult to speak with patience of the shallow critics of the Bible who are enraptured over the charms of artistic genius, but who deny to this book the honor of having given subjects, ideals, patience, motive, and inspiration to the immortal artists in all Christian lands and times.

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THE MUSICAL INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

XVIII.

THE MUSICAL INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

AMONG all nations, ancient and modern, civilized and barbarous, music in one form or another has been greatly honored. Music is the art or process of arranging tones into forms of beauty in harmony with recognized laws of combination. We are able accurately to trace its historic development as probably the chief of the fine arts; and we are now able also to master the abundant materials necessary for a science of music. Much is known about the laws of musical composition and performance. These foundation principles have been accurately defined and have been logically arranged. There are physical materials with intricate laws, as well as psychological processes, involved in the performance of music. Few sciences are more interesting, instructive, and fascinating than the science of music. Music ought to be much more generally cultivated, alike for its physical, intellectual, and moral advantages, than is common in public or private schools in any country. Cogent reasons could be given why music as a branch of juvenile education should be constantly practised. Continuous instruction in vocal music

would prove an extremely important branch of general as well as of special education. It is unfortunate that music has so often been considered as ministering chiefly to the gratification of those whose lives are spent in mere social enjoyment. We have for this reason often failed rightly to appreciate its direct power as evoking and expressing the noblest emotions. With the advance of the science of sociology, we may well believe that music will come to have a much larger and more honored place in the development and application of the fine arts than it has had in the past. No one can deny that many of the loftiest musical impulses are due to deep religious experience; this experience seeks for proper utterance, and it finds music to be the most expressive vehicle of the noblest religious emotions, as well as the highest intellectual activities. It is on this account that Church music has been so generally appreciated as a branch of liturgics, as well as a true expression of religious emotion in public worship.

Music, in its historical development, has had its barbarous age, and also its transitional period, and it now has reached the artistic stage in its development. In this present era both the science and the technique of the art have made sufficient progress to enable us accurately to prophesy as to the sublime achievements of musical art in the near future. We all know that all nations have a fondness for rhythmical sounds as well as rhyth-

mical movements; as a result we have dances, rhythmical speech, and harmonious sounds. Both the Hebrews and the Greeks and all the nations of the Orient have contributed something toward the development of musical science. The introduction of Christianity could not be without its influence on the development of music. The Middle Ages in Germany, Holland, and Italy gave us striking examples of the influence of Christianity in the development of religious thought, taking its color and form from national characteristics. In the sixteenth century a great revolution in music was contemporaneous with the Lutheran Reformation. In the seventeenth century marked progress was observed in musical development in most parts of Europe. German music, as was to be expected, was principally concerned in adapting its special features to the spirit of the religious reformation of which Luther was the great leader. There is not space, however, here to trace the influence of Christianity in the development of musical art in different countries, through the mediæval and later centuries.

The psalm-singing of the Puritans was one of the powerful influences in the development of music in the United States. The story is as quaint as it is suggestive, both religiously and musically, showing the discussions had by many earnest Puritans regarding what was permissible in public service. There were great differences

of opinion as to whether it was proper for only one to sing while all the rest joined only in spirit, saying "Amen" at the close of the song; and whether women as well as men should be permitted to take part in the public services of song, and especially whether the unconverted should be permitted to sing at all in religious worship. There was grave discussion also as to whether it was lawful to sing psalms in metre devised by men, and whether it was permissible to learn new tunes, the old tunes having become authoritative, as if they were inspired of God. Recent revival movements have given rise to new conceptions regarding church music, in the United States as well as in Great Britain. But we may rest assured that the noble compositions which are embodiments of the highest forms of musical art and of religious devotion and emotion will never lose their hold in the religious services of cultured and consecrated Christian people.

MUSIC AND RELIGION.

Luther said, "Music is the heart of the prophets"; and in so saying, Luther uttered a great truth. All true prophets are also to some degree great poets; and all great poets are in some measure great musicians. Certainly music is one of the noblest gifts which God has bestowed upon men; but music only rises to its highest point

when it is inspired by deep religious devotion. Nothing is more certain than that the operettas of the hour are only for the hour. They do not possess the true elements of endurance; these elements are found only in musical compositions that are imbued with the religious spirit. The same remark applies to all forms of literature. All great classic poems, tragedies, and dramas are really religious. They embody the deepest religious experiences and emotions of which their authors were possessed. We may say that the great classic authors were heathen; the statement is true. Nevertheless they wrought under the influence of a religious inspiration; and that inspiration has given immortality to these great dramas and tragedies. The profound questions which have been discussed by Christian authors were in their essence discussed by these tragedians and dramatists. A moment's thought will show that at heart many problems of Christian theology are closely related to the subjects of these great dramas and tragedies. They were often attempts to discover the deep things of God, or to justify the ways of God with men. It has been finely said that—

"Devotion borrows music's tone,
And music takes devotion's wing;
And like a bird that hails the sun,
They soar to heaven, and soaring sing."

To the Bible we are indebted for many of the greatest musical compositions the ablest musical

geniuses have yet given to the world. No one can lay the slightest claim to musical knowledge, or to the possession of musical taste, who has not seen and admitted the powerful influence of the Bible in its thought and emotion, in the development of musical sounds. Ambrose, bishop of Milan in the fourth century, invented what is known as the Ambrosian Chant. This chant was founded on the first four "authentic modes" of the ancient Greeks, and was sung antiphonally. It continued until the close of the century, when the Gregorian chants were introduced. To the Bible we are indebted for the development of these chants or tones, with all their choral melodies and their profound influence in the development of musical taste and Christian life. To the Bible also we are indebted for the *Kyries* and *Sanctuses*. The *Kyrie* is a form of prayer which occurs in all the ancient Greek liturgies. All who have heard the services of the Greek Church in Russia will remember the almost resistless influence of this part of the service, sung in its melodious monotone by the men in the choirs of the Greek Church. We know also it is to the Bible we are so profoundly indebted for the great *Te Deums* which have place still in books of service and in the worship of so many churches. One cannot think of the *Te Deum Laudamus*, sung on so many occasions of triumph and thanksgiving, without profound emotion. This is certainly one of the

noblest productions of uninspired men ever used in religious worship. Its authorship is uncertain. There are well-founded traditions which describe it as the joint production of Ambrose and Augustine, on the occasion of the baptism of Augustine by Ambrose. It is said that it was chanted as Augustine was coming forth from the water, he and Ambrose bursting forth in this glorious song by a common inspiration. From this supposed origin the *Te Deum* is often called the Ambrosian hymn. Christians of all names and creeds have joyously joined in chanting this glorious production of sanctified musical genius.

LATER MUSICAL PRODUCTIONS.

To the Bible we are also indebted for the grand chorals of Sebastian Bach, who was born in Eisenach, 1685, and who died in Leipsic, 1750. It is stated on high musical authority that excepting Handel, Bach had no rival as an organist. It is true of him as of Handel, that his great religious works are his immortal monument in the history of music. He belonged to a transition period; "standing between the polyphonic music written in the contrapuntal and imitative style, and the harmonic music of definite tonality, his name is at the head of the German school, and he is sometimes called 'the musician's musician.'" His great works include the four settings of the "Passion," the "Christmas Oratorio," the "Easter Oratorio," and the

"Magnificat," and almost innumerable Scriptural cantatas for Sundays and fast days. He has given us a collection of fugues to display his knowledge of counterpoint. But for his religious faith we should never have had this superlative musical genius.

A similar remark will apply to Handel, who has given us "Israel in Egypt," "Samson," "Saul," and especially the "Messiah." Though a native of Germany, Handel spent so large a portion of his life in England that Britain may almost claim him as one of her own sons. It was in England that he composed many of his greatest works. Becoming discouraged by the attempt to give opera in London in a foreign language, having lost many thousands of pounds in the effort, he left in 1741 for Dublin. A friend gave him some passages of Scripture, as he was starting on his journey, as the text for a great oratorio; on these he composed his "Messiah," which was first known as the "Sacred Oratorio." It was produced in that city first for charitable purposes. It has since given him fame throughout the civilized world. Parts of it were composed in the deepest conceivable religious spirit. Tears mingled with the ink as some of its notes were written. He himself has told us that in writing its glorious Hallelujah Chorus he seemed to see the great God in whose presence he felt himself to be standing. Parts of it so stir one's religious emotions, as well

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as charm one's musical taste, as to suggest the idea that if heaven have anything musically finer, we must have a development of endurance, else the joy of the heavenly scene would consume us with its rapturous delight. Blind as he was, he still composed his matchless music, and being led to his seat at the organ, played it in the midst of the plaudits of his delighted audiences. On Good Friday, April 13, 1759, he died, as he said, "in hopes of meeting his good God, his sweet Lord and Saviour, on the day of his resurrection." Handel will live forever in the loving memory and the delighted experience of every appreciative hearer of the noblest religious music.

But for the inspiration of the Bible, Haydn would never have given us his "Creation." It has been truly said that the celebrated chorus of the "Creation," "The Heavens Are Telling," is perhaps second only to the Hallelujah Chorus of Handel's "Messiah." Joseph Haydn was born on the confines of Hungary and Austria, in 1732. In the suburbs of Vienna he composed his oratorios, "The Creation" and "The Seasons." The harmonies of "The Creation" are pervaded with the fires of youth, although it was written in his sixty-fifth year. Some critics consider this equal to the finest productions of Handel. "The Seasons" was almost his last work.

But time would fail to speak at length of Mozart, who has been called the Raphael of music.

He certainly was one of the greatest geniuses in musical history. In 1791 a mysterious order came for him to write a requiem, just as he was starting for Prague. This requiem has made his name immortal. Musical critics affirm that he combined the characteristics of the Italian and German schools with marvellous skill; and also that to his great musical genius he added the suavity of manner and the beauty of sentiment rarely found even in the sons of the highest art. He died before he had completed the great work on which he was laboring, and his body found rest in a pauper's grave, no trace of his grave being found, although a monument has been erected to his memory.

To the inspiration of the Bible Beethoven is indebted for his grand "Missa Solemnis," and his other great composition, "The Mount of Olives." There were several well-marked periods in his musical history. Shut out as he was, in large measure, from the enjoyments of social pleasures, he found compensation in a world of his own imagination, and brought forth from it those imperishable treasures of harmony which have given him rank among immortal artists. Some of his greatest creations belong to what is known as the second period of his artistic life; but the "Missa Solemnis" is the product of the third and last period of his remarkable career. This and other works produced at that time belong to the highest sphere of art. It has been said by musical critics that the deep

mysteries of his last works can be apprehended only by those possessed at once of deep religious and artistic emotion and of wide and accurate technical and musical knowledge. These critics also affirm that the chorus in the "Mount of Olives," "Hallelujah to the Father," is worthy to be placed in the same category with the sublime choruses of Handel and Haydn. In 1824 his ninth symphony and parts of the grand "Missa Solemnis" were performed, but he was so deaf as not to hear a sound. It was the bitter irony of fate that he who had given unspeakable pleasure to so many thousands by the art of sound should be deprived of hearing. His heart was wounded by the ingratitude of a nephew; and he died during a terrible thunder-storm, March 27th, 1827. The London Philharmonic Society relieved the anxieties of his death-bed, and his last words were expressions of thanks to his English friends.

The Bible also gave Mendelssohn his imperishable oratorios, "Elijah" and "Paul." But time would fail even to mention the name of every one of the noble artists whose greatest productions were inspired by the Word of God. One is often astonished at the strange neglect of the Bible by the delighted listeners in concert halls to the music of these sublime oratorios. One aim in these lectures is to show the indebtedness of music to revelation, and of art generally to the old Bible which many so largely neglect, and of which occa-

sionally they speak with a disrespect as surprising as it is reprehensible.

BETTER THINGS TO COME.

We may be quite sure that the Bible has still greater musical inspiration for some musical genius of the present or a future generation, than it has ever given to the musicians in the past. Its resources are by no means exhausted. John Robinson, in addressing the Pilgrim fathers as they were starting on their perilous journey, uttered a great truth when he said: "I am very confident the Lord hath more truth yet to break forth out of His holy Word." All forms of human genius find inspiration in this divine book. We may be absolutely certain that some consecrated musical genius will yet give the Church a nobler *Te Deum* than the one which has been joyously chanted these hundreds of years; that some future Bach will give us a grander choral than even his which has risen from the heart and trembled on the lips of thousands of reverent singers; that some other Handel will tell us of new glories in the Messiah which even he did not discover, or which at least he did not declare in his immortal oratorio; that another Haydn will reveal to the world new beauties in creation, and will show that

"The heavens are telling"

a sublimer song than that which he wrote and which has echoed through the world ever since;

and we may be sure that Beethoven has not exhausted the varied poetic and tender associations of the Mount of Olives. It is impossible to exhaust the charms of God's unwritten Bible of nature; it is equally impossible to exhaust the matchless wonders, the unspeakable beauties, and the heavenly glories of God's written Bible of revelation. New themes will suggest themselves to new musicians, as they will also to future poets, teachers, and preachers. New perfections in the character of Christ, new elements in the Fatherhood of God, will constantly be observed, and will be joyously declared in song and sermon, in sculpture, painting, and music. In proportion as musical art is consecrated to the glory of God, it will be ennobled in spirit, exalted in utterance, and immortalized in influence. The world awaits the coming of the great singer, the inspired preacher, and the resistless musician. Such will always have place and power in the advancement of the kingdom of God among men. All true religious believers are members of God's great chorus. They are all undergoing a process of training for participating in the world's sublimest song. The whole creation now groans, waiting to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. The whole creation is waiting, watching, and praying for the complete adoption of God and the entire redemption of body and soul through Jesus Christ. Yonder on the

sea of glass mingled with fire are those that have gotten the victory, standing, having the harps of God, awaiting the moment when the divine Leader of this redeemed choir shall give the signal to sing the sublimest hallelujah chorus ever uttered by human lips or heard by human ears: "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints"; "Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

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THE LITERARY INCITATION OF THE
BIBLE.

XIX.

THE LITERARY INCITATION OF THE BIBLE.

THE Bible has exercised a powerful influence on all forms of literature. When the mind of man comes into contact with the mind of God, all human faculties are aroused. Mind sharpens mind in all human relations. How much more, then, is it true that the human mind is aroused, energized, and ennobled when it comes into contact with the mind of God. This is true as God is studied in nature, in providence, and in revelation. The Bible ennoble every language into which it is translated. It intellectualizes and to some degree spiritualizes every people among whom it is disseminated. It is the suggestive remark of Dr. James Hamilton that God not only made the Bible instructive, but also attractive; and he illustrates this idea in its relation both to the physical world and the divine Word. God, as he indicates, might have made a world without a carpet of verdure or a ceiling of blue; He might have made a world without mountains, cataracts, or forests, and without rainbows or flowers. A comparatively plain world, consisting of pasture land, arable fields, clumps of trees, magazines of fuel, and a few other

necessities, would have held and fed the populous earth. But God had an eye for the beautiful and the sublime in the physical universe. He therefore gave us Mont Blanc, the Pyrenees, and the Himalayas. He had an ear for music, and He therefore gave the zephyr its song and Niagara its thunder. He had pleasure in colors and symmetry, therefore flowers abound, and beauties in many forms adhere to mountain, forest, and field. In like manner, God has made the Bible not simply a book of duty, but a volume which attracts by its manifold charms. He might have given us simply a few plain paragraphs and a few simple commands; but He has chosen to give us the picturesque in narrative, the majestic in poetry, and the instructive in parable, prophecy, and proverb. He gave a book not simply to be a dictionary and a grammar, but one which should instruct the mind, captivate the taste, expand the intellect, transform the affections, and purify and ennoble the entire life of man. He has given us, as the same author also suggests, apples of gold, but even the basket in which these apples are offered to men is a basket of silver, beautiful in form and attractive in design. In all these respects the Bible is unique among the literatures of the world.

ITS STIMULATING POWER.

No other book so stimulates intellectual activity as does the Bible. It has been the chief element

in the instruction of some of the greatest writers and thinkers the world has yet produced. When John Bunyan was locked up for twelve years in Bedford jail, he produced his "Pilgrim's Progress." His only library was his Bible and Foxe's "Book of Martyrs." These were his intellectual companions as he produced his immortal "dream." So admirable was the intellectual and spiritual culture of this unlearned "tinker of Elstow," that the scholarly John Owen testified before the king: "Your Majesty, if I could write as does that tinker in Bedford jail, I would gladly lay down all my learning." The Bible was John Bunyan's teacher, text-book, and college. He rejoiced in the glorious fellowship of Moses in the law, of David in the Psalms, and of Isaiah and other holy men of God who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. We may read Homer, Milton, Shakespeare, Dante, and all the great authors of a later period and even of modern days, but all combined will fall short of the inherent beauty, purity, and power, or the intellectually stimulating elements that are found in the Word of God. In all these respects this word has no peer in the whole broad range of ancient or modern literature. It has largely made the English tongue what it is, and also has stimulated the best forms of literature in that language. The Bible gave dignity, honor, and power to all the earlier translations into the Anglo-Saxon and the German languages. It

would be easy to illustrate and emphasize this remark by calling the roll of its honored translators, and showing the influence of their translations upon the language and learning of their times. These remarks have special application to the so-called Authorized Version. Its production was a great enterprise. Published in 1611, it soon proved its intrinsic superiority over all preceding English translations, and finally practically drove them from the field. It is couched in noble language; it abounds in wonderful felicities; it is musical, dramatic, and at times almost tragical in descriptions and delineations. It has portions equally pathetic and sublime; and it also has a directness of utterance and a reasonableness of thought which commend it to all classes and conditions of men.

We might apply to the Bible the words of Spenser in his "*Faërie Queene*," when he says:

"Dan Chaucer, well of English undefyled,
On fame's eternall beadroll worthie to be fyled."

The Bible produced marvellous effects when translated into German by Martin Luther. Not only did it have a great influence in extending the Reformation, but it also influenced the German language, virtually making the high German the common dialect. Within a hundred years high German, through the influence of the Bible, had come into such general use in churches and schools that low German had degenerated into a patois. It is a remarkable fact that during the hundreds

of years since the Authorized Version was issued, the English tongue has changed less than it had changed during the half century which preceded that version of the Bible.

The power of the Bible in stimulating the intellect and ennobling the language of a people is seen in the great orators, dramatists, and preachers who have been chiefly instructed by its teachings. Its influence upon the eloquent and mighty Chatham was well-nigh as great as it was upon Bunyan the humble tinker. It gave him variety of vocabulary, clearness of thought, and purity of speech. Its influence was equally marked upon John Bright. He was a tenacious student of Milton and the Bible. His sustained eloquence would have been impossible but for the inspiration which he received from the immortal poet and the divine book. We have only to remember the wonderful power as a preacher and writer possessed and manifested by the beloved Charles H. Spurgeon to see again the wholesome influence on heart, mind, and speech of the old Bible. He lived in the atmosphere of divine revelation. He obeyed the exhortation in the book of Jeremiah, and literally did eat the Word of God. He masticated, digested, and was powerfully sustained by this heavenly food. And it gave him all his crystalline clearness of thought, pellucidity of speech, as well as purity of heart and life.

INFLUENCE IN LITERATURE.

John Stuart Mill is quoted as saying: "The Bible and Shakespeare have done more than any other books for the English language, introducing into the soul of it such grand ideas expressed with such sublime simplicity." No one can read Shakespeare without discovering that he was a careful and constant reader of the holy Scriptures; his writings show that he had great familiarity with the thought and language of the sacred book. It is affirmed, on apparently good authority, that "Shakespeare quotes from fifty-four of the Biblical books, and not one of his thirty-seven plays is without a Scriptural reference. Genesis furnishes the poet thirty-one quotations or allusions, the Psalms give him fifty-nine. Isaiah furnishes twenty-one, Matthew gives sixty, Luke thirty, and the epistle to the Romans supplies twenty."

The most notorious of modern agnostics speaks sneeringly of the Bible, claiming that Shakespeare unabridged and unexpurgated is his Bible. Does this agnostic forget the source of Shakespeare's inspiration and of much of his power? Does he forget that the Bible (looking at the matter simply from the human standpoint) is the book of books, and that merely as a literary monument it remains, and must ever remain, as the noblest example of the English tongue?

Reference has already been made to Bunyan's

"Pilgrim's Progress." Macaulay has declared that in the latter half of the seventeenth century there were only two minds which possessed the imaginative faculty in a very eminent degree, and that one of these minds produced the "Paradise Lost" and the other "The Pilgrim's Progress." It would be difficult to exaggerate the influence and power of the "Pilgrim's Progress." This pilgrim has gone through the world scattering spiritual blessings with a liberal hand on every side. This book led even the leviathan Johnson to confess that he read it through and wished it were longer; this book fired the chivalry of Scott, stimulated the philosophical analysis of Southey, and ennobled the research of Mackintosh; the poet heart of Coleridge was gladdened by its pages, and the scholarly Arnold found comfort as he studied its truths. It has found its way to every quarter of the earth, being read in the shadow of the Vatican, up the far rivers of Burma, amid the gardens of Ceylon, under the palms of Elim by the Arab wayfarer, and even by the daughters of Salem, on the slopes of Olivet and on the shores of the Galilean Sea. We know well that but for the Bible, Dante's "Divine Comedy" would never have been written. Without doubt, as this is the first great Christian poem, so it is one of the very greatest which Christianity has produced. Dr. A. H. Strong, in his recent essay on this poem, speaks of it as the "Pilgrim's Progress" prepared in the atmosphere of mediæ-

valism and in the religious teaching of Romanism. He states that its object is to show the heinousness of sin and the blessedness of the divine forgiveness. Amid all the influences, personal, international, and religious, which led to its production, no influence was so great as that of the Bible upon the mind of its author. We know well, also, that the Bible aroused the latent genius of Tasso, the author of "Jerusalem Delivered." He was one of the greatest poets of Italy. No doubt much of personal ambition entered into the motives which produced this record of the conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders; but he was moved by piety as well as by poetry. He dreamed of a crusade of poetic genius, and he aimed to make songs that should be as immortal as were the deeds of the Crusaders, whose heroic acts he celebrated. We shall not deny that he greatly desired the applause of courts, and that he knew that the names of the noble families would be revived in this epic of their exploits, and thus the author would receive the favor of the rich and the powerful. But we do not forget that he was himself a knight, and that it was natural for him to celebrate the warlike deeds of other knights, acting under the impulse of chivalry and religion. But for the Word of God, this great epic would never have been produced. The comedy of Dante and the epic of Tasso did much to develop the language of Italy, helping to do for that melodious

tongue what Luther's version of the Bible did for the robust high German. It was the Bible, with its heavenward tendencies, its judicial grandeur, its sublime imagery, and its divine sanctity which inspired the heart and constrained the song of these two great Italians in their literary achievement.

We know also that other forms of literature as well as music, painting, and sculpture owe a great deal to the Bible. Every intelligent student of literature must know that the Red Cross knight in Spenser's "*Faërie Queene*" is simply the armored Christian described in the sixth chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians. One does not need to read much of Pope's "*Messiah*" to discover that it is but a paraphrase of poetic and seraphic passages in Isaiah. It is also easy to see that Cowper's "*Task*" drew much of its imagery from the same noble prophet, that the "*Thanatopsis*" of Bryant could never have been written but for exalted and inspired pages in Job, and that Wordsworth's "*Ode on Immortality*" is but the echo of glowing and glorious thoughts expressed by the apostle Paul in his sublime and logical discussion of the doctrine of the resurrection in First Corinthians, the fifteenth chapter. Even a cursory student of Shakespeare, to refer to him again, must see that his conception of woman, of a Desdemona and of an Ophelia, would have been impossible had not his mind been prompted by a Bible and a Christian ideal.

Klopstock's "Messiah" could never have been written, any more than the great works to which reference has just been made, had it not been for the influence of the word of God. This German poet was to some degree a prose writer as well as a poet. His name deservedly has a high place in German literature. Some of the cantos of his "Messiah" give him honor alike for nobility of thought and for simplicity of faith; and he exercised an influence on the national taste of his generation which was greatly beneficial. Goethe, although believing that Klopstock had become somewhat obsolete, still acknowledged the wholesomeness of his influence on German thought. He found Germany penetrated by French influence when he began to write; but he broke loose from that foreign despotism, and gave the honor of nationality to German poetry. His "Messiah" has been translated both into verse and prose in English and in other tongues. We know well that to the Bible are we indebted for Young's "Night Thoughts" and for Pollok's "Course of Time," and many other noble works which occupy honored places in the literature of different centuries and nationalities.

The indirect influence of the Bible in suggesting characters and subjects in literature is scarcely less than its direct influence in giving intellectual stimulus and spiritual inspiration. But for the Bible many of the elements in Scott's "Ivanhoe"

would never have suggested themselves to the thought of this great writer. A similar remark will apply to Uncle Tom in Harriet Beecher Stowe's immortal story, to George Eliot's Dinah Morris, and to many other characters in still more recent literature. Dr. Spring, as quoted by Mr. William Walters, after remarking that Shakespeare, Byron, and Southey owed some of their best scenes and inspiration to the Bible, says: "At the suggestion of a valued friend I have turned my thoughts to the parallelism between Macbeth and Ahab, between Lady Macbeth and Jezebel, between the announcement to Macduff of the murder of his family, and that to David of the death of Absalom by Joab; to the parallel between the opening of the lamentations of Jeremiah and Byron's apostrophe to Rome as the Niobe of the nations; to the parallelism between his own ode to Napoleon and Isaiah's ode on the fall of Sennacherib; and also to the resemblance between Southey's chariot of Carmala, in the curse of Kehama, and Ezekiel's vision of the wheels; and have been forcibly impressed with the obligations of these writers to the sacred Scriptures."

Wherever the Bible is widely diffused and carefully read it develops all the intellectual faculties. The Dark Ages were such in considerable part because there was then a famine of the Word of God. Wherever that condition prevails to-day, illiteracy abounds. The Bible is now, and long

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has been, practically excluded from Spain. What is the result? There ignorance, superstition, and bigotry have long been dominant. The fact is that the Roman Church has never favored popular education. In countries like the United States, where Protestantism prevails, she has been compelled in self-defence to open schools of her own. But her true attitude toward the education of the masses is seen in countries where she has long had undisputed sway. In the "Encyclopædia of Education," edited by the superintendent and assistant superintendent of public schools in New York City, in the article on illiteracy, we are told that in Italy illiteracy is 73 per cent, in Spain it is 80 per cent, in the Argentine Republic 83, in Poland 91, and in Mexico 93, while in so-called heathen China it is only 50 per cent. Out of the total population in Spain of about eighteen millions, recent statistics affirm that twelve millions are illiterate. Similar statistics could be given of Cuba, Porto Rico, and other countries from which the Bible has been long virtually banished. Priestly domination practically excludes the Word of God; and its exclusion results in the triumph of ignorance, superstition, and tyranny.

The Bible has exercised a powerful influence in restraining immoral literature as well as in creating a literature that is pure and noble. It is impossible to overestimate its indirect influence along this line. The best way to preach down

error is to preach up truth, and the only way to drive out darkness is to let in light. The Bible thus excludes ignoble and immoral literature by filling the home and the heart with noble thoughts, pure inspirations, and divine aspirations. Thus the Bible is in all times and lands the friend of knowledge, the herald of progress, the source of literature, and the richest benediction to human life in all its broad ranges and varied interests.

He is the enemy of much that is most beautiful in culture, most exemplary in character, and most divine in literature who would rob our educational institutions of the presence and power, as a literary excitant and as a spiritual inspiration, of the inspired book of the ever-living God. This book, when rightly studied, will enable each of its students to say, with clarified minds and purified hearts: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

THE LEGISLATIVE DOMINANCE OF
THE BIBLE.

XX.

THE LEGISLATIVE DOMINANCE OF THE BIBLE.

THE Bible has exercised a boundless influence on the legislation of all civilized nations. Few legislators pause to reflect on their great indebtedness to the Bible, alike for the principles of law and for the formulation of that law in different countries. It is not too much to say that the last four books of the Pentateuch furnish the foundation on which the methods of right legislation have been constructed. We have in the Decalogue the germ of all moral duty in all the varied ranges of life. Our Lord with His matchless wisdom in affirmation of great principles—a wisdom never surpassed and never equalled—reduced the Ten Words to two statements; one table of the law He included in His declaration of the duty of supreme love to God, and the other table of the law He included in His affirmation of the duty of equal love to our fellowmen. There is not the slightest doubt but that the influence of the Decalogue filtered through all the strata of human thought and life, not only in Israel, but to a considerable degree among other nations also. The study of the entire sacrificial system among the Greeks shows

that they learned much from the inspired teaching which controlled the Hebrews in their religious life. Indeed, the brightest torches of classical philosophy, poetry, and literature generally were kindled on Jewish altars. God made the dispersion of His ancient people contribute greatly to the illumination of all the nations of the earth. Doubtless the dispersion and captivities of the Israelites were controlled by God alike for their own warning and instruction and for the impartation of essential religious truth to the nations by which they were surrounded. There is little doubt that the Mosaic code in its essential features was known in many countries in which arose the most celebrated founders of systems and formulators of laws.

THE SUBLIME DECALOGUE.

Nothing can surpass the grandeur and sublimity of the circumstances in which the Decalogue was given to Moses, and through him to the people of Israel. The people since their departure from Egypt had passed fifty days on their memorable journey. The fiery pillar went before them by night, and the cloudy pillar by day. They were now conducted into the very heart of the desert. They were now prepared by such miracles as the manna and the smitten rock to receive the most stupendous and the sublimest of all the revelations which God had yet bestowed. Nothing could sur-

pass the grandeur of the scene when the law was given to the people. On the lofty heights of the Sinaitic range of mountains—eminences rising toward God as if they were the ruins of some ancient world—with the Persian Gulf on the one side and the Red Sea on the other, God came down, making these splintered peaks and hoary rocks His august pulpit. The region was new to the people of Israel, although not unknown to their great leader and lawgiver. Often in that same Horeb Moses had fed the flocks of Jethro, and at the bush that flamed with fire he had received his solemn commission. Few places in all the earth could have been chosen by God more suitable, by loftiness, solitariness, and sublimity, for the impartation of the divine message to men. These mountains rise to a height of nearly ten thousand feet. They stand in majestic grandeur above the barren plains. This region was God's sanctuary, as this mountain was God's pulpit. Here the book of heaven, written on tables of stone, was given to the waiting peoples.

The Decalogue is well worthy, in itself, of the remarkable conditions under which God communicated it to His chosen people. We are not surprised that the people almost feared, in this solemn environment, to hear the voice of the Eternal. Never was a code of law in which so much meaning is found in connection with so much simplicity and brevity of statement. The old Talmudic name,

the Ten Words, expressed the truth that God condensed into a few sentences the greatest truths ever communicated to the human race. These words are so plain that a child can readily apprehend their meaning; they are so few that they can be committed to memory with little effort, and never be forgotten. Compared to the numerous intricate and perplexing laws upon the statute-books of all the civilized nations, the Decalogue stands out unique in simplicity, solemnity, practicality, and divinity. The first table is distinctively religious. It teaches what is our true relation to God as Creator and Preserver. The second table is moral, declaring our true relation to our fellowmen. In the first, God is presented as the supreme object of worship; and in the second we are shown the possibility of worshipping God aright by the faithful performance of our duties toward one another. We have in this remarkable code great principles capable of universal and spiritual application. We may well say with Joanna Baillie:

"The terrors of that awful day, though passed,
Have on the tide of time some glory cast."

No wonder the people were filled with holy awe and silent wonder as they witnessed the thunders and the lightnings, and listened to the noise of the trumpet proclaiming the existence, the power, and the holiness of the great God of Israel and of the whole earth. They might well ask,

"Who is like unto Thee, O Lord?" Israel has never entirely forgotten the solemn experiences of the hour when this divine law was received. References to that solemn experience are found in psalmody, prophecy, and history. It was a sensation too solemn and divine ever to be forgotten, even by those schools of thought among the Israelites in which the divine mission of Moses and the inspiration of the ancient Scriptures are but lightly esteemed. No wonder that Disraeli said: "The life and property of England are protected by the laws of Sinai; the hard-working people of England are secured a day of rest every week by the laws of Sinai." Not only the people of England but the people in all civilized lands have reason to bless God for the Decalogue. The subsequent history of Israel, to a large degree, revolved around the holy mount. Our Lord did not come to destroy the law; He positively affirmed: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law. . . . I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." That law stands revealing the holiness of God, and summoning mankind to duty toward Him and toward one another. Jesus Christ did honor to that law; nothing has been abrogated. It was simply fulfilled by His perfect obedience to God and His holy life among men. This Decalogue is the first statute-book against idolatry and polytheism. Its very first commandment says: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." That is the very heart of

all true worship. We may have many objects of desire and affection, but the moment any desire is cherished in preference to God, that moment we become in heart idolaters. A child who can repeat that command is wiser than Socrates or Plato, than Homer or Hesiod, for these philosophers and poets were worshipping lords many and gods many. This same law sets apart one day in seven to the service of the Almighty. This is one of the most beneficent enactments in the history of humanity. This law consecrates one day in seven to needed rest and to divine worship. It lifts up its hand, saying to toil: "Thus far shalt thou come, and no further." The man who opposes the Sabbath is an enemy to the race and an enemy to God. Our Sunday is God's benediction upon struggling humanity in its manifold cares, burdens, and sorrows. Humboldt, who certainly was not a prejudiced observer, says: "The selection of the seventh day is certainly the wisest that could have been made. To some extent it may be optional to shorten or lengthen labor on other days, but in regard to man's physical power, and for perseverance in a monotonous employment, I am convinced that six days is just the true measure. . . . When in the time of the Revolution I spent several years in Paris, I saw this institution, despite its divine origin, superseded by a dry and wooden decimal system. Only the tenth day was a day of rest, and all customary work was continued for nine

long days. This being evidently too long, Sunday was kept by several, so far as the police permitted, and the result was too much idleness." No man will ever be able to state the world's indebtedness to the day of holy rest, and to all the other requirements in the divine Decalogue.

INFLUENCE ON OTHER NATIONS.

Attention has already been called to the excellent as well as wide influence which the Decalogue has exerted upon other nations. Scholarship is conclusively showing the mutuality of indebtedness between the Egyptians and the Israelites. This is a comparatively new, and it promises to be a very fruitful, line of inquiry. Until lately, many persons hesitated to admit that the Hebrews learned from the Egyptians; and many scholars unsympathetical toward revealed religion, were unwilling to admit that the Egyptians borrowed anything from the Hebrews. Without doubt, the indebtedness is mutual. The Phœnicians, as a branch of the great Semitic race, and as brought in many ways into contact with the Israelites, borrowed very largely from the Hebrew code of laws, as well as from other forms of ceremonial and religious instruction. During three centuries (1300-1000 B. C.) the Phœnicians covered all the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean with their forts and factories. The Ægean Sea, with all its islands, was in their hands. They sailed along the shores

of the Black Sea, founded colonies in Spain, and passed over the Atlantic to Britain. They were a marvellous people. There is no doubt whatever but that the Greeks borrowed generously from the Phœnicians, the careful inquiries of our own day are thus developing the indebtedness of one nation to another. To Minos, one of the mythological kings of Crete, the celebrated "Laws of Minos" are ascribed, and he is said to have received from Jupiter the wisdom which he embodied in these laws. Here a great truth is taught—the truth that the human mind requires divine illumination before it is capable of formulating a code of laws for the government of a people. It is not unlikely that traditions were handed down to the people concerning the historic fact of a divine revelation made to Moses, and through him to the people of Israel. Lycurgus, the celebrated Spartan law-giver, is supposed, although his history and legislation are involved in such obscurity as to be almost mythical, to have flourished about 880 B.C. The traditions inform us that he travelled in many foreign lands, including Asia Minor, India, Egypt, and Iberia; that he compared the political situations of the various countries he visited, and that finally he returned to Sparta, filled with knowledge, and thus fitted to be one of the greatest law-givers of the race. The true theory, no doubt, is that which supposes Lycurgus thus to have collected, codified, and enlarged the previously exist-

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ing institutions in Sparta from the knowledge which he gained by foreign travel and constitutional study. It is not at all incredible that he came into contact with different nations among whom the laws of Moses were the dominant influence in their government. We know that Solon, another famous Greek lawgiver, was also a student of codes as formulated and observed by many different nations. Doubtless to him was attributed in the traditional way much of the wise legislation of his time, although his relation to it may have been indirect; and in some instances laws whose paternity was not known were attributed to this great Athenian. But the laws of Moses are superior to those of all the nations, even the very greatest, during the classical period. A distinguished French jurist, himself an atheist, in comparing the laws of Moses with those of other great lawgivers, says: "Lycurgus wrote not for the people, but for an army; it was a barrack he erected, not a commonwealth; and sacrificing everything to the military spirit, he mutilated human nature to crush it into armor. Solon could not resist the effeminate and relaxing influence of Athens. In Moses alone do we find a morality distinct from policy, and for all times and peoples. The trumpet of Sinai still finds an echo in the conscience of mankind, the Decalogue still binds us all."

Whence, then, we may well ask, had Moses this marvellous wisdom? Questions affecting the re-

lations of the rich and the poor, the duties and the rights of man, are now demanding answers. The spirit of the Bible alone furnishes the true solution of all these practical problems.

We know that Athens became a fountain of legal wisdom, as it was a source of poetical inspiration, to Rome. Athens was, as Milton sang, the "mother of arts and eloquence." Its influence was as commanding as it was extended. Roman laws finally were codified by Justinian. As a legislator he gained his great renown. He collected all previous legislative enactments which were still in force. He first compiled a code which comprised all the systems of his predecessors, and he also harmonized and published authoritative commentaries of the jurists. This code was republished in 534 A.D., with an edition of his own constitutions. His third great legal undertaking was the composition of a systematic treatise on the laws, and this treatise was widely circulated and carefully studied, that it might be a guide to students and lawyers. Its title was "The Institutes." Under the careful superintendence and direction of Tribonian, these compilations were made. They were all written originally in Latin; but the later treatises, whose preparation Justinian supervised, were written in Greek, and were entitled "Novellæ," or New Works. His character as a ruler is in marked and favorable contrast with that of many of his

predecessors and successors, and his public administration, apart from his effort to control ecclesiastical affairs, exhibited equal ability and uprightness; but in his relation to religious matters he was alike arbitrary and imperious.

We know that the laws codified by Justinian have entered into those of nearly all the nations of Europe. In the Saxon laws, as republished under the direction of Alfred the Great, there is a generous infusion of the principles of the old Hebrew code; and that element gives to these laws no small part of their cogency and justice. No student of these great fundamental and eternal principles can fail to see that they go back for their origin to the wonderful code delivered by God on Mount Sinai. The laws now dominant in Great Britain and all her colonies, and in the United States, are but streams flowing from the Mosaic fountain, which in turn rises in the very bosom of God. Well did Milman, in his "History of the Jews," say: "The Hebrew lawgiver has exercised a more extensive and permanent influence over the destinies of mankind than any other individual in the annals of the world."

DIVINE LAW AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

The Mosaic law was interpreted and exalted by the teaching of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament Scriptures. He came not to destroy but to fulfil the Mosaic law, and in fulfilling

it He necessarily interpreted that law. To this law we are indebted for the liberties which we enjoy as Americans, as Anglo-Saxons, and as members of the human race. The liberties of men are spreading with beneficent rapidity. The key-word of the nineteenth century is *emancipation*. The historian of this century, writing by the light of the next century, will see and state this fact more clearly and forcibly than it is possible for us to see and state it to-day. In harmony with this spirit, slaves were emancipated in Jamaica, serfs to the number of over forty millions in Russia, and four millions of black men in the United States. This spirit is moving forward to-day with rapid strides. It has penetrated the "Dark Continent"; and the song of liberty will soon go through its mighty forests, along the banks of its majestic rivers, and the shores of its almost shoreless lakes. We are entering upon the greatest era in the history of the human race. Liberty in the noblest sense will be one of the fruits of the Spanish-American war. The waves of the Caribbean Sea, as they break upon the Cuban shore, are chanting liberty's *Te Deum*, and that song rises to its diapason over Porto Rico, and its sublime hallelujah chorus will be sung even in Spain. Spain will rise up to thank God and America that she has been translated out of the sixteenth century into the twentieth century, and out of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny into civil and religious liberty. Religious

liberty is a natural right belonging to every man; he claims the privilege of worshipping God according to the dictates of his own judgment and conscience. For these inestimable privileges we are indebted, in no small degree, to the divine Decalogue.

The kings of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Assyria, and other heathen nations, imposed religion by absolute decree upon all their subjects. The Roman Empire legislated for religion as well as in secular things. Unfortunately Christianity, when under the influence of the Roman and some other churches, had no practical conception of religious liberty. The cruelties of Papal Rome have never been surpassed by pagan Rome in the days of its most Satanic persecution of Christians. When Constantine embraced Christianity he desired to bring the Church, as well as the state, under governmental control. Unfortunately, at the time of the Reformation, even in England, as well as in Europe, when the authority of the Pope was renounced, Protestant kings assumed the headship of the Church. This condition of things greatly contributed toward the settlement of British colonies in America. But some of these colonists came to America to enjoy religious liberty for themselves and to deny it to all others. In South Carolina, New York, and Virginia the Church of England was established by law; and in many parts of New England a species of theocratic gov-

ernment was the law of the land, and the heavy hand of law came upon those who desired to worship God in ways not indorsed by the Puritan ecclesiastics. To the noble Baptist Roger Williams belongs the high distinction of being the first to found a state, Rhode Island, that entirely separated civil government from religion,—that truly recognized the right of every man to absolute religious liberty. This principle was finally adopted in the Constitution of the United States. And the influence of these American and divine principles is powerfully felt to-day in Europe and throughout the whole world. Even Great Britain does not possess entire religious liberty; non-conformists suffer many disadvantages, and are subjected to many forms of humiliation. We trust that the day will soon come when the Anglican Church in Wales and England, and the Scottish Presbyterian Church in Scotland will be disestablished by law, as the Anglican Church has been in Ireland. In our heart of hearts we all can sing with Cowper:

" 'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume;
And we are weeds without it."

The men who fight the battles of civil and religious liberty in all parts of the world are the men who believe in the Bible. The great tree of liberty is sending its roots down into the soil of every land, and its blessed fruits will soon be gath-

ered by all nations, whatever their color or creed. In the Bible alone can be found the inspiration which will lead to true "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." For nearly a century these three words have embodied the creed of many lovers of liberty in France and other parts of the world. No doubt they have been used without proper meaning or limitation, and have done much on the continent of Europe to cause the movement known as "the Revolution." But the true interpretation of these words is suggested by the Word of God. The Bible led to the doctrine of equality, as set forth in the American Declaration of Independence. That doctrine is incarnated in the words, "All men are created equal." John Adams, the friend and successor of Washington, and second President of the United States, has stated rightly this doctrine in the words: "That all men are born to equal rights is true, . . . but to teach that all men are born with equal powers and faculties . . . is as gross a fault . . . as ever was practised by monks, by Druids, by Brahmans, by priests of the immortal Lama, or by the self-styled philosophers of the French Revolution."

But for the principles of God's Word the emancipation of the serfs in Russia would never have occurred. It is well known that when Alexander the Second was but a child, his father, the Emperor Nicholas, observed him sad and thoughtful. Upon inquiry as to the cause, the boy replied: "I

am thinking of the poor serfs, and when I become emperor I will emancipate them." This reply startled his father and his courtiers. Efforts were made to fill the boy's mind with attractions of the court, and to banish from his thought these serious impressions. It was discovered that in reading the Scriptures the youthful Alexander learned that all men were brethren, and that God had "made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." These truths dropped as an incorruptible seed into the heart of the young prince. They grew with his growth, strengthening with his strength, and at last they budded and blossomed when by his imperial ukase (two years in advance of the Emancipation Proclamation by the immortal Lincoln) he gave liberty to over forty millions of Russian serfs.

When the Bible shall have had its legitimate, and so supreme, influence over all legislation and conduct, the dream of the Golden Year by the illustrious and now glorified laureate shall be realized in every nation. Then—

" Shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal peace
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
Through all the circle of the golden year."

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THE DOMESTIC FELICITIES OF THE BIBLE.

XXI.

THE DOMESTIC FELICITIES OF THE BIBLE.

THIS is a very broad and an equally suggestive and instructive subject. It is also a subject of special interest in our day. Seldom has there been a time in our country when the teachings of the Bible touching all the questions relating to home and family life were more needed than at this hour. The Bible surpasses all other books in the wisdom with which it answers important and often perplexing questions in family life and daily duty. It is the great statute-book for all times and nations. Only as its teachings are fully understood and clearly obeyed is family happiness possible. Only as its laws become incorporated into human codes will family life realize its high and holy ideal. Our city and country have recently acquired an unenviable notoriety because of flagrant disobedience to the laws of the Bible in regard to marriage and divorce. A portion of the community, often spoken of as the "four hundred," has become conspicuous for its degrading disregard of family propriety and divine law in relation to personal purity and appropriate marriage. The Scotch word "sconnered" excellently expresses

the feeling of disgust entertained by a considerable proportion of the better classes socially and religiously, regarding this recent violation of the laws both of God and man. We are greatly in need of uniform laws governing marriage and divorce—laws which shall be strictly observed in all the cities of the American Union. We are greatly in need of the observance of the Word of God as the one rule governing all the relations of life. The whole country has been so humiliated in the eyes of the civilized world by the gross, vulgar, and altogether abominable course pursued by those to whom reference has just been made, that the need of such laws is keenly felt. Questions have often arisen as to the canons of various churches regarding the marriage of divorced persons. The true statute-book touching this matter is found in the New Testament, in the words of the Lord Jesus Himself. We shall never be wiser than was the great Master; we shall ever be guilty of folly until we accept His words as the only law governing all these delicate and holy relationships in life.

SOCIETY AND THE BIBLE.

In these recent days a new significance has been given to statutes affecting society and socialism. We have brought into common use the phrase "social science," and the somewhat barbarous word "sociology." By social science is meant the

study of all that relates to the social improvement of the community. A society was organized under the leadership of Lord Brougham, July, 1857, its aim being to consider the best means of uniting and harmonizing all the elements that may cooperate in the common advancement of the people. Organizations now exist in different parts of the United States, and under the general term sociology the study of the origin and development of human society is carried on by many philosophical and philanthropic men and women. All that relates to social well-being is of the utmost importance to every well-wisher of the human race. Socialism has become a significant feature of our time. Historically it is a product of the French Revolution. That revolution was itself in some sense a protest against the feudalism of the Middle Ages. In the eighteenth century, in France, England, and Germany, a new social society giving great prominence to the rights of humanity as a whole became conspicuous. Perhaps the first manifestation of that modern spirit of industry was an extreme individualism. Now it has become socialistic rather than individualistic. Here, as everywhere, the great principles laid down in God's Word must finally become the dominant influence and the guiding force, else the best interests of individuals and communities cannot be preserved. Without doubt, society is an institution of God. All men have instinctive

cravings for companionship. No tendency in the human race is more marked than its gregariousness. Our various faculties and affections require congenial society for their symmetrical and so appropriate development. We are dependent one upon another from the cradle to the grave. The Word of God tells us that God has set the solitary in families, that man was made for domestic life, for friendship, and for citizenship, with all their varied privileges and consequent obligations. Society demands that we relinquish certain privileges to which we might be entitled if we lived as savages or remote from human habitations. Just in proportion as we enjoy great advantages in human fellowship, must we abandon certain individual rights. Society is made up of such relinquishment because of the advantage which comes from association. This principle is illustrated in urban life at every point. Many things a citizen of a great city must set aside which he might possess were he living in a rural community. But the gain in other directions far more than compensates for the loss in any given regard.

The Bible everywhere recognizes the divine origin of the family and of society; and the Bible supplies the right motive and due direction in the performance of the varied duties which these relationships imply and necessitate. Everywhere the spirit of the Bible is conducive to the sanctification and exaltation of the home. It has been said

that the dearest words in our language are *mother*, *home*, and *heaven*. Certain associations of the utmost tenderness gather about each word in this remarkable triad. We can ill spare all that the old-fashioned word *home* suggests in our personal and family experience. There is no word in the French language for home. It is true that there are in that language various partial substitutes for this beautiful and inspiring word. The word is in Anglo-Saxon *hām*; in German it is *heim*, and it is allied to the Greek word *kōmē*, meaning a village. It has this meaning also in all the languages in which it appears in its various forms; and that old Teutonic idea is preserved in such names as Burnheim, Nottingheim, Hochheim, and Mannheim. But in our ordinary usage the word is far more tender and suggestive than if it were extended to include a village, or if it were limited to the house in which one resides. Dryden well said,

"Home is the secret refuge of our life."

While the French have substitutes for this word, even they themselves will frankly admit that they have no exact equivalent for this word. All that is meant in the relation of husband and wife, parent and child, brothers and sisters, is wrapped up in this tender word *home*. Even the grave is spoken of in Scripture as our "long home," and no thought of heaven is more precious than that suggested by the words "our heavenly home."

This idea of home the Bible everywhere recognizes, emphasizes, and sanctifies.

The Bible also gives sacredness to the marriage relation. In one form or another marriage is one of the oldest institutions of society, and is the source or product of some of its most ancient laws. Two institutions come down to us from the happiness and holiness of Eden, marriage and the Sabbath. These divine institutions have outlived the cataclysm which separated man from God and man from man; they have thus survived the fall and are anticipations of Eden restored. The necessity for the regulation of the relations of men and women in family life has been felt in all the ages of human history; a similar necessity obtains also in defining their obligations to their children. The practice of the greater nations of the civilized world indorses the marriage of one man and one woman at a time; but monogamy is a comparatively recent development of marriage. Few social studies are more important and instructive than those connected with the marriage relation as it has been developed in many civilizations and as it has manifested itself in different centuries and religions. In 1085 Hildebrand declared marriage to be a sacrament of the Church. At the Reformation Calvin elevated that thought to a still higher level, declaring marriage to be an institution of God. Unfortunately, the school which recognized Grotius as its leader made mar-

riage simply a contract or partnership. We are at present suffering in the United States from the inconsistency of our laws in regard to the whole subject of marriage and divorce. As already implied in this lecture, we never shall reach salutary ground until we take the Word of God as our great statute-book touching this important relationship in life. Its profound principles, if fully obeyed, would sanctify and glorify the marriage relation. In all instances where that relationship is robbed of its power, this sad result is due to the total or partial neglect of obedience to the great statute-book on marriage as on all other human relationships. It will be well for all our churches to get back to the plain and authoritative teaching of the Head of the Church in deciding every question regarding marriage, divorce, and all family relationships.

The Bible also sanctifies family life. It gives parents the honor of the obedience to which they are entitled. It stimulates brotherly and sisterly love, and binds the members of the family together in consideration and affection. It has been well said that "The Bible transforms the house into the home." There is no true family life where its presence is not enjoyed and its precepts obeyed. The importance of the family relation was recognized even in heathen times and families. Among the Greeks the family or house was recognized as the nucleus of society. Aristotle

went so far as to speak of it as the foundation of society; and he quotes Hesiod as declaring that the original family consisted of the wife and the laboring ox. Strangely enough, in that conception of family life the ox was considered as occupying the position of a family servant. The Greek idea of family life includes the idea of the slave in his relation to a man and his wife. The Roman idea associated the family life still more closely with that of the state. The position of the father was taken as the basis of the political and social relation of the people.

In Christian countries the family bond is exalted, sweetened, and spiritualized. Marriage is made an essential condition of the true development of home. Home, then, becomes not merely a house, not merely a shelter, but it suggests comfort, decency, purity, nobility, and godliness. Only as these ideas are preserved and illustrated does family life become estimable in itself and a benediction to the children in the home. Every home ought to have an open Bible as the symbol of supreme authority. Such an influence would be more beneficial than the wisdom of all the statesmen of all the ages. The principles of the Bible will allay every passion, inspire all noble ambitions, sweeten every drudgery, and beautify every obligation in every family. This spirit makes the birth of every child a time of solemn joy and thoughtful thanksgiving; it lightens the sorrow of sickness,

and makes death but the porter who opens the gate of glory to the departing soul. We cannot too strongly emphasize the value of godly homes in building up the nation.

Finely has Father Hyacinthe, in one of his Notre Dame Conferences, as quoted by Mr. William Walters in his little volume entitled "Claims of the Bible," said: "Show me families worthy of the name—true domestic commonwealths—father and mother, king and minister, enthroned together in the midst of the circle of their children, talking to them of ancestors, of honor, of duty, and being hearkened to—commanding in respect, and still more in love and being obeyed; show me a father, king in his home, and so much the more free in the world without as he is authoritative in the world within; show me homes like these, and I will show you republics! The genuine free citizen is the father, respected and obeyed at home. It is out of such sturdy materials as these that lasting social order can be built."

DIVORCE AND THE BIBLE.

This relationship has already been touched upon in the preceding remarks, but it is deserving of fuller emphasis. It is well known that the desire to obtain release from matrimonial bonds has manifested itself in every age and under every civilization. This release was often granted in heathen nations on the slightest grounds. The Romans

considered marriage as little more than a conventional union, and as such it was observed only so long as it suited the convenience of both parties to the contract. Christians take much higher ground, adopting as the basis of their systems the Scriptural law as given by the Lord and His apostles. Marriage among Christian nations was generally regarded as a sacred tie, to be dissolved only on the ground of infidelity to the marriage vow. Unfortunately now, by many Christian people, and apparently with the sanction of Christian churches, this Scriptural ground for divorce is largely abandoned. In Roman Catholic countries the principle laid down by the Council of Trent, in its decree declaring marriage indissoluble even when both parties had violated its Scriptural conditions, has been generally observed; but in those countries it is not a little remarkable that dispensations can be secured with the utmost ease, and that according to the very highest testimony, in countries so distinctively Catholic as Porto Rico, and Mexico, it is affirmed that one-half of the families are living without having gone through any form of marriage whatever. They are not even under what is known as a common-law marriage; and most of their children are born outside of wedlock. In many of these countries the priests have been accustomed to charge sums of money for the performance of the marriage ceremony which the poor people were unable to pay, and the result was that marriage

was to a large degree entirely discarded. Even in other conditions, where persons desired to contract marriage, they were forbidden by the canons of that Church, and dispensations have been secured without much difficulty which permitted the consummation of the marriage in violation of all ecclesiastical canons. Luther and Calvin taught that divorce should be granted on what were known as Scriptural grounds, and also for malicious desertion. There is probably no reproach attaching to American social life to-day greater than the ease with which divorces can be secured. The reasons assigned are often most ridiculously frivolous, and yet the divorces are granted; and often those thus divorced, as in this recent case in New York, step across the bounds of New York state, and almost before the ink is dry on the decree of divorce forbidding the one proved guilty to remarry, a remarriage is consummated in another state. The time has come when all true American citizens must declare their abhorrence of a system which permits so degrading a condition of things. The peculiarly offensive feature of impropriety is that the parties to it are known as being active in Church life, and especially in a Church whose canons such a marriage violates. But they remain in the enjoyment of their church relations without discipline, and soon they will have social and ecclesiastical approval.

WOMAN AND THE BIBLE.

The Bible has been to a very remarkable degree the friend of woman. In the Orient woman is man's toy or slave by turns, and sometimes she is virtually both at the same time. In continental Europe she is honored as nowhere in the Orient; but even in continental Europe her condition is often one of marked dishonor. She sometimes is at work in the fields yoked with an ox, and is frequently the drudge and virtual slave in the home. In Great Britain her position is much more honored than anywhere in continental Europe. In America she receives a degree of respect, position, and honor not surpassed, perhaps not equalled, even in Great Britain. Here she is man's equal, his companion in all the tenderest relationships and in all the holiest duties of life. This is peculiarly woman's century; its last quarter has given her honor in all the walks of business and professional and social life as never before in human history. She is queen of the home, and the home is peculiarly her domain of noblest influence, while that influence is extended at the same time to many kinds of professional life and to some of the duties of a business career. There is no doubt but that the long and marvellous reign of Queen Victoria has tended greatly to the honor of woman in every civilized land. Her influence has purified her court, and has tended to the purification of every

royal court on the globe; that influence has brightened the lowliest home, and has ennobled the humblest womanhood in every country. It was an American who gave us the phrase, "the queenliness of the woman, and the womanliness of the queen"; and it was an American who gave the world the toast, "Victoria, queen of Great Britain and Ireland, empress of India, and woman of the world." In Greece, in the days of her classic glory, woman was merely a slave; the only woman who might enjoy the intellectual companionship of men was a woman of a class whose very name is a dishonor to womanhood in every age and land. This class of women were educated, and permitted to associate with educated men. The most honored figure on a woman's tomb, in that day of classic glory in Greece, was a muzzle, suggesting that she should not speak, and a pair of reins, teaching that she should be driven by her husband. In Rome the honor and reverence given to her now in the most intelligent lands of Christendom were utterly unknown. The Bible teaches the true relation that ought to exist between the sexes. Tennyson in his noble words—words that will live through all coming years—but expresses the thought of Scripture regarding woman in the tender relationship of marriage, when he tells us that woman—

"Is not undeveloped man,
But diverse. Could we make her as the man.

Sweet love were slain ; his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.
Yet in the long years liker must they grow,
The man be more of woman, she of man ;
He gain in sweetness, and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world.
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind ;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words."

The Bible blesses all ranks and conditions, as it does both sexes, in society. It makes the rich considerate toward the poor, and the poor unenvious toward the rich. It teaches that noble manhood and beautiful womanhood may be found in the lowliest cottage and in the most splendid palace. The poor have ever found the Bible to be the best guide in life, and Jesus Christ to be their dearest and truest friend. The spirit of the Bible has built hospitals, orphanages, academies, colleges, and all the noble institutions of all the noblest charities. It has bridged over the chasm between classes, uniting all in one true and noble brotherhood. The spirit of this brotherhood is present only as the spirit of Jesus Christ and of the inspired Bible is also present. Nothing is more certain than that the Gospel is the harmonizer of all the conflicting interests of human society. It alone levels society—levels it up and not down. Jesus Christ was a working man, and the laborer will find in Him evermore his truest friend. All that is true in communism is the offspring of

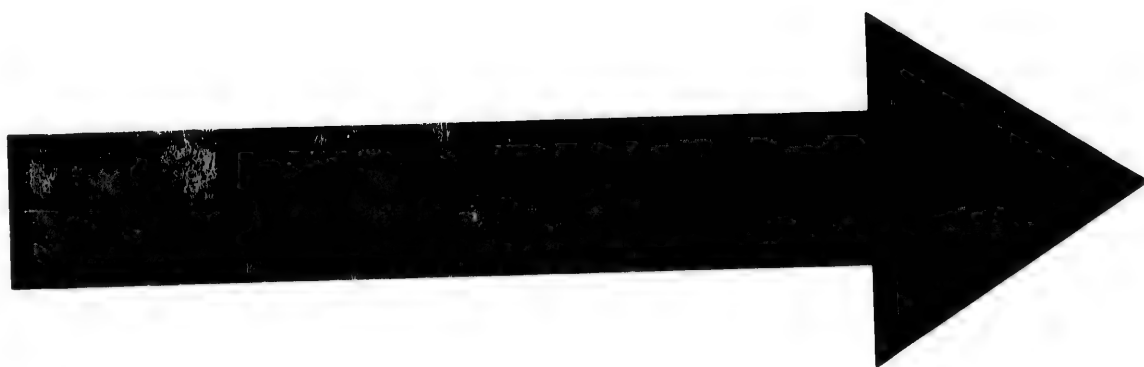
Christ's religion. All that is evil in it is opposed by that Gospel. Put Christ into the hearts of employer and employed, and injustice, oppression, and strikes will be impossible. No form of slavery can exist in an atmosphere warmed by the love of Christ. In that warmth the chains of slavery melt. Could Philemon look on Onesimus as a chattel when the love of Christ was in the hearts of both? Impossible! The old bond might for a time exist, but the slave Onesimus and the master Philemon were now brethren in Christ. What good thing have all the centuries produced whose origin is not in this blessed Bible? Its spirit lifts now, as in all the past, nations and races out of barbarism into civilization, out of sin into holiness, and from earth to heaven. A Christless philanthropy is a meaningless thing. Christ was the true reformer, the divine humanitarian, the spiritual regenerator. Guizot tells us that "Christianity has carried repentance even into the souls of nations. Pagan antiquity knew nothing of these awakenings of the public conscience. Tacitus could only deplore the decay of the ancient rights of Rome, and Marcus Aurelius could only wrap himself up sorrowfully in the stoical isolation of the sage. There is nothing to show that these superior men so much as suspected the great crimes of their social society, even in the best days, or aspired to reform them." The world's hope, in every relation of life, is in this old Bible. Let it have its

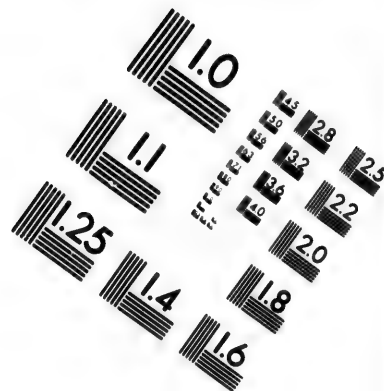
place in every workshop and counting-house; let it throw its radiance over every home; let it be enthroned in every heart. Then will be realized a vision far transcending the dream of the eloquent and tuneful Macaulay in his "Lays of Ancient Rome":

" Then none was for a party ;
Then all were for the state ;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great ;
Then lots were fairly portioned ;
Then spoils were fairly sold ;
Then Romans were like brothers,
In the brave days of old."

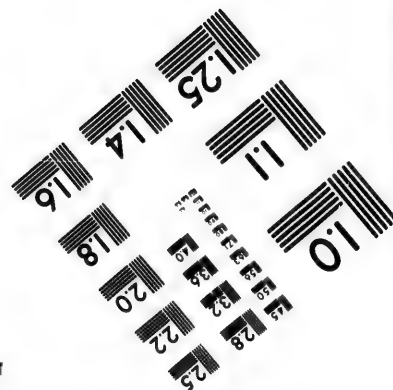
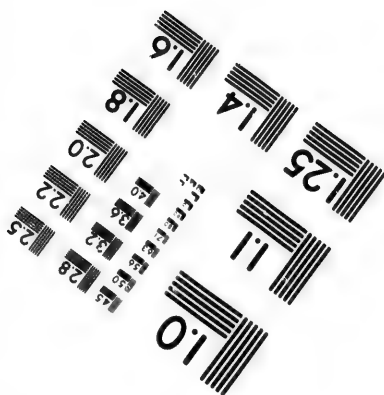
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THE INDESTRUCTIBLE VITALITY OF
THE BIBLE.

I

XXII.

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE VITALITY OF THE BIBLE.

THE writer of the epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the Word of God as "quick and powerful." This is striking language. The common translation uses here the old and now almost obsolete Saxon word *quick*. The word means *living*. The word translated *powerful* is in the original *energetic*. It is a word instinct with force, and this inherent force makes it powerful in its outward manifestation. The Word of God is not simply living, it is life-giving; it is not simply vivid, it is vivifying; it is not only vital, it is vivific. The apostle Peter expresses a similar thought when he affirms that God's book "liveth and abideth forever," and also that "the word of the Lord endureth forever." There is majesty in this description of the divine word. Amid all earthly revelations, amid the fading glories of earthly things, this book abides, unchanged and unchanging. It never loses its power. It thus comes to pass that the writers in the New Testament echo the eloquent words of Isaiah in his prophecy when he declares that "the word of our God shall stand forever." Empires have risen and fallen, kings have triumphed and

then have vanished from sight, but God's promises are unfailing; His word, like Himself, is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

It is endowed with immortal youth, with resistless power, with unfading glory; it is more granitic than granite, more enduring than the diamond, more unconsumable than asbestos. What it is to-day it has been in all the past, and will be in all the years to come, unchanged and unchanging. Nothing is more remarkable than the contemporaneousness and indestructibleness of the Word of our God. It is abreast to-day of the most advanced commerce, the most developed science, and the most cultured intellect. As well might one say that the sun and moon had become obsolete, as to affirm that the Bible was obsolete or even obsolescent. The Sermon on the Mount as delivered by our Lord must ever be in advance of the highest thinking of the greatest philosophers of the world. One looks in vain for the enduring monuments in the organizations of Minos, Lycurgus, and other founders of systems and creators of laws. Where are their books to-day? They have lacked enduring vitality. But no tyrant has been able to burn the Bible, no traditionalism to choke its vigorous growth, no heretic to corrupt its heavenly teaching, and no priestly power to destroy its dominant influence with those who hear gladly the words of the Lord. The fires of criticism have largely destroyed the fables of the

Shasters and the Koran, but from the heated furnace of criticism the Bible has come forth unconsumed and unconsumable. Never was its vitality greater than it is at this hour. Were it destroyed, much of the happiness of the world would wither; our sweetest hopes, our tenderest relations, and our brightest prospects would perish were this book destroyed. Its destruction would cloud the scene of hope with doubt, fill life with despondency, and death with despair. Better blot out stars, moon, and sun from the natural sky, better rob earth's green carpet of grass and plant and flower, better take every charm from home and family, than rob the world of its noblest treasure, its brightest hope, its divinest book, the holy Bible.

RESISTING MANIFOLD OPPOSITION.

The Bible early came into contact with that strange *mélange*, that almost indefinable combination of heathenism and Judaism, mysticism and Christianity, known as Neoplatonism. This system of thought was largely devised by Plotinus. Porphyry, Iamblichus, Hypatia, and Proclus were its leading representatives in different centuries. It was an eclectic philosophy, and was nearly coeval in origin with Christianity. Later, however, it developed into a system largely pantheistic, and so it became distinctively anti-Christian. At a time when asceticism was in great favor, and when

mysticism charmed many thoughtful minds, this system of philosophy possessed many attractions. Clement, Origen, and other Christian writers show some sympathy with it in its earlier stages. Many causes combined to give it popularity. It was a time when the old heathenism was losing its power, and when various systems of thought were struggling for recognition. Perhaps its chief founder was Ammonius, called Saccas because of his employment as a corn porter. He is usually considered the founder of the Alexandro-Roman school of Neoplatonism. He was born of Christian parents, but being absorbed in the study of heathen philosophy, he apostatized from his earlier faith. Without the advantages of broad culture, he developed an enthusiastic love of knowledge, and his great abilities enabled him to overcome his earlier disadvantages. Plotinus was the first fully to develop the system. He was born at Lycopolis, a city of Upper Egypt, A.D. 205. A fundamental principle of his philosophy was to gain a knowledge of the essence, the principle of things, by immediate intuition. This system of philosophy was long powerful, and at one time it seemed as if it would become dominant even in countries where Christianity had been preached. Porphyry became the greatest disciple of Neoplatonism and the most famous opponent of Christianity. His original name was Malchus, the Greek form of the Syro-Phœnician word Malek, which signified *king*.

He is supposed to have been born at Batanæa, the Bashan of Scripture, or, according to other authorities, at Tyre, A.D. 233, and to have died about 304, and probably at Rome. It is not too much to say that he was one of the ablest opponents Christianity has ever encountered. He was thoroughly equipped at every point. He stands vastly higher than Lucian or Celsus, who had preceded him in their opposition to Christianity. They treated Christianity with a sneer or a syllogism; but he determined utterly to destroy it. He boldly entered the arena to dethrone Jesus Christ. But all his opposition came utterly to an end. To-day probably not one out of every four men of liberal education can give a clear statement as to his personality or opposition to Christianity. But the Gospel lives, and Christ reigns. Porphyry's name was an allusion to the color of royal robes, but Jesus Christ and not Porphyry is king and is entitled to wear the royal purple. His attacks upon Christianity have been overruled for good; they have a great interest and value to the student of the inspired records. As already implied, he was a man of high culture and of varied ability. Lucian was endowed with keen wit, but he was a jester, attacking various philosophies and religions with wit and ability, but apparently with little sincerity or moral earnestness. Celsus has often been spoken of, because of his vulgar gibes and ribald remarks, as the Thomas Paine of his period.

But these elements are nowhere found in the arguments of Porphyry. Celsus wrote a volume known as "*Logos Alethes*"—"The True Word." This was the first considerable polemic against Christianity. It was probably written about 150 A.D. We probably never should have known anything of this volume but for the answer given to it by Origen, in his eight books entitled "*Contra Celsum*." In answering the arguments of Celsus he quoted them with great fulness. Apparently he did not know the author whose work he refuted; and there is considerable doubt to this hour as to which one of several men who bore the name of Celsus it was to whom Origen made his reply. Porphyry was marked by broad scholarship, an elevated tone, and apparent candor in all his discussions. He had a warm attachment to the philosophy of his master. He endeavored to surround his own system with supernatural elements, and to disprove not simply the substance of the Gospel teachings, but also the records in which that teaching is found. In this respect his course was entirely new. Those who preceded him admitted with perfect frankness the genuineness of the Gospel records; and it is that admission which transforms their opposition into an apologetic advantage for all Christian teachers. Porphyry suggested, if he did not originate, the method of attack pursued by many of the so-called higher critics of our own day. His work consisted of fifteen books,

but we can discover information concerning only five of these books. He, as already implied, was one of the most brilliant and thoroughly equipped opponents of Christianity in all the ages. But he did not destroy its vitality. Its life is still energetic, vivific, immortal.

Julian, surnamed the Apostate, because he renounced the Christian faith, also became one of the most virulent foes of Christianity and of Christian records. He was one of the most earnest and influential friends and patrons of Neoplatonism and of the old and dying heathen culture. Pathetic elements enter into his history. He was trained under an austere, monastic, tyrannical, and hypocritical form of belief. As he grew in years and knowledge he became an enthusiastic admirer of heathen poets and philosophers, and an implacable enemy of Christianity. He was a nephew of Constantine the Great. As an apostle of the heathenism of pantheistic Neoplatonism, he determined to restore the Græco-Roman paganism and to dethrone Christianity. He claimed intimate personal intercourse with Jupiter, Apollo, and other gods; he was vain, sophistical, and loquacious. When but twenty years old, in the year 351, he apostatized from Christianity, but for political purposes he concealed with consummate hypocrisy his pagan sympathies until the death of Constantius. He developed great military ability; and in the year 361 he openly declared his devo-

tion to heathenism. For a year and a half he was emperor. It will be admitted that he was one of the most gifted, energetic, and variously able of the Roman emperors. His opposition to Christianity and the Bible shows that paganism was dying, and that Christianity alone had in it the life of truth and the hopes of humanity. He strove to galvanize a corpse. He was charmed by the culture of Hellenism, and in giving his admiration to it for its culture he gave it devotion as a religion. In his book against Christianity he united all the arguments of Lucian, Celsus, and Porphyry, and put into his disquisition his own caustic spirit. His attack called forth able refutations, so that his words were powerless to destroy the Word of God and the Church of Christ.

Julian has borne valuable testimony to the Bible. He admits the birth of Christ; he witnesses to the genuineness and authenticity of the four gospels and the Acts of the Apostles; and he quotes them, showing that they were received as authentic and authoritative books by the Christians of his time. He not only admits their date, but for his own special argument emphasizes the reality of that date; he refers to the epistles of Paul to the Romans and the Galatians; he admits the miracles of Christ. He, of course, has his own method of accounting for these miracles and of explaining the existence of the gospels; but his admission of their existence and authority is of

the utmost value in proving their genuineness and their vitality. He died June 26th, 363, from an arrow when at war with the Persians. A later tradition tells us that as his life-blood mingled with the sand on which he lay, he threw a handful of it into the air, exclaiming, "O Galilean! Thou hast conquered!" Dying at the age of thirty-two, he left a great number of orations, letters, satires, and poems. His work entitled "Refutation of the Christian Religion" is lost, and he himself has passed into the shadows, while the glorious book which he endeavored to destroy lives with an undestroyable vitality, and an incalculable influence over all the civilized nations of the earth. Why did not Neoplatonism set up a religious community? It had very much in its favor. It remodelled the ancient religions, and it endeavored to make them the exponent of a pure morality. Why did it not succeed? The answer is indicated in Augustine's "Confessions": It lacked a divine founder; it had no genuine cure for sin, and so could not give peace to troubled hearts; and it appealed chiefly to cultured and speculative minds. It could be a school only for the "wise and prudent," while the common people gladly received Christ and His truth.

THE BIBLE AND POPERY.

The Roman Church in our days aims to secure the reputation of being in sympathy with the Bible in countries like Great Britain and the United States. But in all countries where its power is well-nigh supreme, its opposition to the Bible is continuous and bitter. The Council of Trent declared that tradition was of equal authority with the Bible; it maintained that the translation of the Scriptures into the vulgar tongue was productive of evil rather than good, and that the people ought not to read nor to possess copies of the Scriptures. When Wickliffe published his translation, Gregory condemned him for having "run into a detestable kind of wickedness." Leo X. published a bull against Luther when he issued his translation, and expressed his opposition in the vilest terms. Pius VII. and Gregory XVI. (the latter as late as 1844) prohibited the circulation and reading of the Bible. The Roman Church persecuted Wickliffe in his life and endeavored to besmirch his name with foul abuse after his death. His bones were disinterred and his ashes cast into the small stream which flows past Lutterworth. Thomas Fuller finely says: "Thus the brook conveyed far into the Avon, and the Avon into the Severn, and the Severn into the narrow seas, and they into the main ocean; and so the ashes of Wyckliffe are the emblem of his doctrine

which is now dispersed all the world over." The Roman Church burned hundreds of copies of Tyn-
dale's New Testament in the churchyard of old St. Paul's. The Roman Church seized whole editions of the Bible in the Flemish, Hungarian, and other tongues. The hostility of that Church to the Bible is seen in the fact that it has put to death thousands upon thousands of the devoted disciples of Jesus and the Bible. We have only to witness the unspeakable cruelties of the Duke of Alva and the Inquisition in the Netherlands and in Spain to have conclusive proof of the opposition of that Church to the Word of God. We have only to turn to its attitude to-day in Spain, in Cuba, and in Porto Rico, in the Philippines and all over South America, to the preachers of the Gospel and to the gospels themselves, in order to know what is the real heart and spirit of that Church. Nevertheless it has not destroyed the Word of God. Its vitality is undiminished, its glory is undimmed, its power is unlimited.

THE BIBLE AND CRITICISM.

Neither has a pseudo-scientism been able to destroy the vitality of the holy Scripture. There is no opposition between a true science and the inspired Bible. Many of us remember the alarm with which we learned that geology was opposed to Genesis. That alarm will never again be experienced. The Bible will adapt itself to the teach-

ings of an assured science so soon as those teachings are assured. We may have to modify some of our interpretations of the Bible, but its divine truths will remain the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. There can be no contradiction between God's revelations in creation and in revelation; there may be a contradiction between our interpretations of these revelations, but not between the revelations themselves. Let all men possess their souls in perfect patience. God's book will abide in all the ages to come, as it has withstood every form of opposition in the ages that are past.

No form of criticism can destroy the vitality of this divine word. The breath of the Eternal is in its truths, and the power of the Almighty is in its words. We know that when it was brought to bear upon two such unbelievers as Gilbert West and Lord Littleton, it brought both under the control of its heavenly spirit and divine truth. They became infidels from a superficial acquaintance with the Bible. They agreed to expose what they called the imposture of the book. Mr. West selected as the special object of his attack the resurrection of Christ, and Lord Littleton chose the conversion of Paul. They entered earnestly upon their work, filled with contempt for Christianity, and moved by hostility to the Bible. When they came together to compare notes of their progress, they lamented their former unbelief, and congratulated each other that they had received new light

and life. Each wrote an able treatise in defence of the Christian faith. The Bible need fear no honest criticism, no sincere opposition, no earnest spirit of inquiry after truth. The so-called higher criticism has enabled us to correct some traditional errors, and to discover valuable methods of inquiry; but we must guard against its hasty conclusions, its unwarranted assumptions, and its unfair methods. Were the orations of Chatham, Burke, Pitt, Webster, or Clay subjected to the methods of analysis and criticism often employed upon the Word of God, they would become meaningless far-faragos. A similar method of criticism has actually been applied to various human productions, showing how vicious is the method and how untrustworthy are the results. A recent writer applied the methods of the higher criticism to Burns' poem, "To a Mountain Daisy." This writer conclusively proves, if we grant the correctness of this method of criticism, that the first five stanzas of that beautiful poem were not composed by Burns; he also shows by the same method that the next three stanzas were certainly composed by another man than Burns, and he proves that the last is of very doubtful authorship. All through this process of criticism he freely uses Professor Driver's phrases in his article on Genesis. One grows utterly weary of this method of criticism. The polychrome Bible fails to give certainty. One critic makes one color stand for one authority, and another for another;

then comes another critic and he exactly reverses the colors of the former critic, and the earnest reader turns with no little indignation, saying: "A plague on both your critics!" This method of criticism is having its day. It will soon be over. Already the pendulum is swinging toward a simpler life, a purer faith, and a warmer zeal. Professor Sayce has recently affirmed that the spade is to demolish many of the conclusions of philology; that the tablets in the main establish the traditional rather than the later critical view of the Old Testament records; that he has come entirely to disbelieve in the later opinions regarding the Pentateuch; that he believes it belongs to the Mosaic age and was chiefly written by Moses; and that, finally, the literary analysis of the Bible is an utterly unsafe method of reaching results. Thus he mistrusts the conclusions of the higher critics. Professor Harnack has also uttered his protest against many of the conclusions of these critics. Professor Klostermann, of the University of Kiel, on purely critical grounds, opposes the reconstruction scheme of the Pentateuch made by Wellhausen and his school. He insists that both the methods and manners of Wellhausen are utterly wrong. All the criticisms of the most virulent critics will never be able to destroy the divine vitality of this inspired book.

This book has also resisted every form of evil that has ever appeared in the human heart. Sa-

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tanism in every age has opposed its progress, but
has not destroyed its vitality. Hedonism has en-
deavored to sap its vitality, and thus to rob it of
its power; but it moves on in its resistless prog-
ress, and exercises its heavenly sway. We thank
God that it is living and energetic, and that it
shall stand forever.

THE IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCES OF
THE BIBLE.

XXIII.

THE IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCES OF THE BIBLE.

NOTHING is more certain than that the apostle Peter told the literal truth when he said: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty." It is equally certain that we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we have given our unfailing faith to the truth of the Word of God. It is impossible to overestimate the influence of the Bible directly upon human minds and hearts, and indirectly through the fine arts and the noblest forms of literature. All who are well informed must admit, as already hinted, that the poetry of the Bible was the formative influence in the poetry of Milton, Dante, Tasso, and scores more in earlier and later times. It has given birth to the heavenward tendencies in architecture, painting, and music; it is not too much to say that it has created a Christian and even a Biblical school of art. We know that it exercised a great influence over the minds of men who because of their ability and position exercise, in turn, a vast influence over their fellowmen. John

Quincy Adams, the sixth President of the United States, and son of the second President, a man who in his boyhood was the companion of his father on an embassy to Europe, and who passed a considerable portion of his earlier years in Paris, at The Hague, and also in London, and who enjoyed the advantages of association with the best educated men of his time, as well as the training received in Harvard in the study of law,—makes this statement in regard to his habits of reading the Bible: "I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once a year. My custom is to read four or five chapters every morning immediately after rising from my bed. It employs about an hour of my time, and seems to be the most suitable manner of beginning the day." In what light soever we regard the Bible, whether with reference to revelation, to history, or to morality, it is an invaluable and inexhaustible mine of knowledge and virtue. Daniel Webster was no less influential in many respects, and is no less high an authority regarding the Bible than John Quincy Adams. Without doubt Mr. Webster was one of the ablest forensic debaters, as he was admittedly the greatest expounder of the American Constitution which this country has yet produced. We are warranted in saying that the civil war was fought to determine whether Daniel Webster's interpretations of the Constitution, or those of John C. Calhoun, were correct. Mr. Webster's

influence will be contemporaneous with the history of the Bible itself; and this is the testimony which he gives to the value of the Bible in his own experience: "From the time that, at my mother's feet, or on my father's knee, I first learned to lisp verses from the sacred writings, they have been my daily study and my vigilant contemplation. If there be anything in my style or thoughts to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents in instilling into my mind an early love of the Scriptures." The foremost man in all the world during the last quarter of the nineteenth century was William Ewart Gladstone. He was the uncrowned king of Great Britain, and in many respects of the whole world. Among his last works is his volume entitled, "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." He was as earnest in his devotion to the Word of God as he was profound in reasoning, earnest in religion, and brilliant in eloquence. It is safe to say that the great thinkers of the world are on the side of the Bible and Christianity. This statement will bear the most searching analysis as applied to the greatest men in every portion of the civilized world. We cannot too strongly insist upon the influence of the Bible in developing the noblest powers of mind and heart on the part of all its earnest disciples. It is in itself a marvel among the literary productions of the human race; all that is deepest, highest, wisest, sweetest, and holiest in the literature of the world has been in-

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spired by the Bible. It is the cornerstone on which rest modern learning and civilization. It lies beneath all our great colleges and universities, and is the text-book of poets and philosophers, authors and statesmen, students and sages. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that we should be able fully to affirm that the evidences of its divine origin and of its lofty character are irrefutable.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

In an earlier chapter attention was called to the historical evidence as to the genuineness and authenticity of Holy Scripture; we turn at this point to the internal evidence.

This form of evidence, within its appropriate sphere, is unanswerable. The number who can master the arguments of Paley, Butler, Lardner, and others of their class is necessarily comparatively small; but all thoughtful readers of the Bible can appreciate the force of its internal evidence to its own absolute truth. The Bible readily and conclusively, by this kind of evidence, vindicates its claim to be a revelation from God. It bears its credentials on its own pages. The simplicity of its statements, the evident honesty of its purpose, and the sincerity of its motives are too plain not to be discovered even by cursory readers. Its unity from Genesis to Revelation is an irresistible argument in favor of its divine au-

thorship. It is immediately discoverable and absolutely irrefutable that one mind dominated its thought through all its books and through all the centuries of its composition. Its writers number perhaps forty; the period of its composition, as already intimated in these chapters, is more than sixteen hundred years. Its writers represented men in many social positions and of variant degrees of intellectual culture and spiritual attainment; and yet there is no play of Shakespeare, no poem of Milton or of Tennyson, more marked by the spirit of unity than is the Bible. This unity is the more observable when we remember the great changes which took place from the time its composition was begun to that when it ended. Dynasties rose and fell, civilizations appeared and retired, and many legal codes were promulgated and forgotten during the period of its composition. Its later writers had but an inadequate knowledge of the language and civilization of its earlier writers. We often fail to appreciate the force of these statements; we have only to apply them to matters within our own time and civilization to understand the force of this argument. Really we think of Moses and David as both simply ancient writers; we forget that Moses was as much earlier than David as Chaucer is earlier than Tennyson or Longfellow. When David wrote the twenty-third psalm, the ninetieth psalm, written by Moses, was already ancient literature. That

psalm is certainly one of the noblest and sublimest of human compositions; it is profound in its religious emotion, lofty in its theological thought, and simply magnificent in its imagery. That psalm is certainly one of the oldest poems of the world. Compared with it the writings of Homer and Pindar are virtually modern, and the greater part of the Psalter is of recent date. These are facts worthy of great emphasis in connection with the argument now illustrated.

The revelation of the character of God given us in the Bible is another internal evidence of its truth. The greatest minds of ancient and modern times have striven to give us definitions of God. Who is God? How can He be understood? Is He utterly incomprehensible? These are questions which have always been urged, and which never were satisfactorily answered until the answer was found in the Scriptures. We are told that Simonides, the heathen poet, being asked by Hiero, king of Syracuse, the question, "What is God?" desired two days to prepare his reply. At the end of two days he postponed his reply for two days more. His reply was not forthcoming at the expiration of that time, and his final response to the king was: "The more I think of God, He is still the more unknown to me." The Bible gives us the reply which no man of mere human understanding could ever furnish. God is revealed in the Bible in His omnipotence, omniscience, and

immaculate holiness, but He is especially revealed as Father and Redeemer. He is made known to us as possessing and manifesting a father's pity, and as bestowing upon us a mother's comfort. Touching all the deepest questions of human life, the Bible gives its clear and inspiring response. It is its own light; it manifests its own life and light, and in that life and light it manifests also the life and light of all persons and things besides. When the sun is shining in the heavens in its meridian splendor, we need no witness to testify to its presence and power; it is its own witness. The Bible is the sun in the firmament of literature, filling all the heavens and earth of human thought with its celestial light. We know one man from another by the distinctive features of each man's face and voice; by the eye and by the ear we detect distinguishing characteristics, and discover distinct personalities. Not otherwise is it in the Word of God. We know our Father's voice as revealed in His Word. It finds its echo in our deepest souls. The harmony which pervades the Bible is most evident from the first sublime words of Genesis to the last loving invitations of Revelation. We cannot misunderstand its harmony, its unity, beauty, and blessed significance. It thus comes to pass that the writers in the later books are confirmatory of those in the earlier books. A collection of literary or political pamphlets prepared by uninspired men and bound

together in one volume, even though they cover a period of only one hundred years instead of sixteen hundred years, as does the Bible, would be a jumble of hopeless and often even ludicrous confusion. But here is a book, lofty in its thought, spiritual in its motive, and absolutely harmonious in its theological teaching in all its parts through all the centuries.

RESPONSIVE EVIDENCE.

One branch of strong evidence is the adaptiveness of the Bible to the wants of men in all the ages of history. The apostle Paul speaks of the preacher of the Gospel commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. The Bible commends itself in this way in all places and in all ages. Nothing can surpass its ability in this regard; and this characteristic is an argument of great importance. It is a book thoroughly adapted to the poor as well as to the rich, to the ignorant as well as to the learned, to the barbarian as well as to the cultured. It is equally adapted to men of all professions. It is interesting to remember how many professions are represented in the Bible, and professions often apparently contradictory to one another, and yet represented in the same person. We have David as a shepherd and a king; we have Peter as a fisherman, a disciple, and an apostle; we have Luke as the beloved physician; Zaccheus as the envied and hated,

and yet penitent and honored publican. We have Dorcas who plied her needle for the poor, and thus secured an immortality more enduring than that of Grecian poets or Roman warriors. We have the peerless Paul as tent-maker, traveller, preacher, and apostle. We have Zenas the lawyer, Onesimus the slave, Philemon the master, Erastus the Roman chamberlain, and many more, representing various industrial pursuits and professional employments. The Bible was exactly the book which each needed to guide him in daily duty, to fit him for successful service, and to teach him of God and heaven.

The Bible is also prepared to give all men mental development. It is as much at home with the illiterate serf as it is with the most literate philosopher. It abounds in flowery gardens, beautiful landscapes, meandering brooks, Alpine heights, and heavenly glories. It is responsive to the aspirations of youth, to the virility of manhood, and to the senility of extreme age. It places before the aspiring mind of man broad prospects, radiant possibilities, and high and holy ambitions. It sweetens poverty and sanctifies sorrow; it purifies wealth and ennobles joy. It is the guide of inexperienced youth, and is also a staff to men of palsied hands and tottering limbs. It is a crown of glory alike to the light-hearted child and the hoary-headed man or woman. It is filled with lessons of instruction and help for all the relationships of

life and family. It makes conjugal love reminiscent of Eden and prophetic of heaven. It gives wisdom to parenthood and reverence to childhood; it guides citizens in all their relations, and teaches all classes and conditions of men both the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. It comes to men conscious of weakness and sin, with promises of pardon, help, and hope. It has daily help for the souls of men as it promises daily food for their bodies. It is impossible to overestimate its adaptations to all the varying conditions and relationships of life. It lifts all men into a sense of repose, as they are led to trust in God as their souls' help and hope. It shows us that men need God before they can ever have true rest; it shows us that in His bosom alone is the repose which the weary heart seeks. It makes manifest to us not only that man needs God, but that also in some sense God needs man. Christ's happiness, He Himself clearly implied, would not be complete in heaven until His disciples shared its blessedness and beheld with Him His glory. Nothing is more certain than that it is equally needed by and adapted to the Greenlander on his icy mountains and to the Indian on his coral strands; the Hottentot of South Africa needs it and will be blessed by it, as truly as a Bacon, a Locke, an Addison, or a Gladstone. In this respect this glorious book is unique in the libraries of the world. It is a striking fact that when the

late Dr. Dean was laboring as a missionary among the Chinese, and had read to his heathen congregation the first chapter of Romans, an intelligent Chinese came to him declaring that Dr. Dean had written that chapter after he had observed the sinful habits of the people among whom he was laboring. It was difficult to convince this Chinese that this book had been written in another country and hundreds of years before. It seemed absolutely certain to him that the missionary had written it himself after he had learned all about the Chinese in his great parish. The experience of this Chinese is simply that of thousands more in all parts of the world and in all periods in the development of Christianity. Coleridge expressed a great truth when he said of God's law, "It finds me"; and an unlettered man, who knew God by a deep religious experience, expressed a similar thought in saying, "I know the Bible is true because I am well acquainted with its Author."

PROPHETICO-HISTORICAL EVIDENCE.

Prophecy is the revelation of future events with a clearness and certainty not possible by unaided human judgment. These revelations were given sometimes in dreams and visions, and sometimes audibly to the ear of the prophet. Sometimes also God took entire possession of the prophet's mind and brain. Very marvellous are the fulfillments of divine prophecy, as both prophecy and

fulfilment are recorded on the page of revelation. In this paragraph I shall be indebted to Mr. William Walters as he has enumerated both the prophecies and their fulfilments in his booklet, "Claims of the Bible." Ammon, Moab, Philistia, and Edom were nations bordering on Judea. While they were still in the height of their prosperity, their utter destruction was foretold. Upon all these nations Amos threatened the judgments of God. Zephaniah foretold the ruin of Moab and Ammon; Jeremiah pictures in striking language the destruction of Edom, and Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Obadiah unite in similar predictions. Have these prophecies been fulfilled? A single glance at the facts furnishes the conclusive evidence of that fulfilment. Where are the Ammonites to-day? Have not both they and their cities been destroyed? Ezekiel foretold that Rabbah, the metropolis of the Amorites, should become a stable for camels, and comparatively recently a distinguished traveller actually found a party of Arabs stabling their camels among these ruins. The Moabites also have perished; Philistia has perished, although when the prophets declared its doom it enjoyed great prosperity. For many ages these cities were eminent in commerce, but they have long since fallen. Once Nineveh was the great capital of the Eastern empire. Its walls were sixty miles in compass, one hundred feet high, and strengthened by fifteen hundred towers. Three

chariots might have driven abreast on these walls. The book of Jonah tells us of its vast population and also of its great wickedness. The prophecy of Nahum is greatly occupied with the "burden of Nineveh." Zephaniah described its complete destruction. What was the result? In the year 606 B.C. Nineveh was destroyed. For long years its very site was unknown. Now Layard, Botta, Smith, and other travellers have explored its heaps of ruins. In the case of Babylon we have another striking example of prophecy. Herodotus, Xenophon, Pliny, and other profane writers describe its ancient greatness. Isaiah delivered his prophecy against it one hundred and sixty years before its fall. Babylon was then only rising into greatness. When Jeremiah prophesied, Babylon was "the glory of kingdoms, the praise of the whole earth." Nebuchadnezzar had enlarged and beautified it. But its destruction came on apace. For the night in which Belshazzar was slain and Cyrus captured the city, its glory departed. Strabo speaks of it in his time as a vast solitude, and Jerome in his day as a home for beasts.

Striking also is the illustration of the fulfilment of prophecy in the case of Tyre. This city was situated at the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean Sea. It was long a commercial city of the highest importance. Tyrian purple was celebrated in Greece even in the age of Homer. When Tyre was in its full prosperity, Ezekiel uttered his

prophecy of its fall. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and Zephaniah all unite with Ezekiel in foretelling its overthrow. These predictions are most minute. Ezekiel records their complete fulfilment. Tyre is now only a heap of ruins, visited by the boats of poor fishermen whose nets are spread out on the rocks in the vicinity and on its ruined walls, as was minutely foretold.

It would be easy to multiply greatly these illustrations regarding the detailed prophecies of the Old Testament and their literal fulfilment as testified to by historians and travellers in our own day. It is utterly impossible to explain the exactness of these fulfilments except as we understand the Bible to be the book of God alike in prophecy and history. Here stands God. Deny the inspiration of the Bible, and these prophecies and their fulfilments are inexplicable.

EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE.

This branch of evidence is closely akin to that from the adaptiveness of the Bible, as given in an earlier paragraph. Nevertheless there is a distinction to be made between the two. This evidence comes closer home to the heart of individual men and women. It is unanswerable within its own sphere. Thirsty men drink a glass of pure water and are conscious that their burning thirst is quenched; hungry men, although entirely ignorant of the chemical analysis of bread, eat thereof

and are satisfied. So we as religious beings find in the truth of God satisfaction to our immortal needs. By faith we lay hold of divine promises, and our souls' hunger and thirst are satisfied. We do not prove the truth of the Bible by metaphysical demonstration, but by experimental knowledge in the sphere of our religious nature. We then sweetly testify that the satisfaction of our souls, with all their spiritual longings, is due to the influence of this divine book, with all its spiritual supplies. We know that two and two make four; that is a mathematical certainty. We know that hydrogen and oxygen when related to each other in certain proportions make water; that is a scientific certainty. We know with equal certainty that the truth of Christ and Him crucified, when received into the heart, gives satisfaction, peace, and blessedness to the soul. When we believe on Him we are saved, and we know it by proper tests, as certainly as we know that hydrogen and oxygen produce water, and that two and two make four. There are spiritual truths which can be discerned only by the spiritually minded. Every science, such as chemistry, geology, and botany, has its own secrets, and only those who are versed in these sciences can really discover these secrets. Only those who have musical taste and training can understand music in its loftier ranges and deeper meanings. Profound musical truths are musically discerned. We have a right to demand that a

man shall have sufficient musical training and taste before he shall authoritatively pronounce on musical matters. We have a right to demand that a man shall have sufficient mathematical knowledge before he shall attempt authoritatively to pronounce on mathematical science. Not otherwise is it with the Word of God. We are distinctly told in that word that "he that is spiritual judgeth all things." This is a plain and positive assertion of the Scripture itself. We are also informed in that same book that "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." Here is a profound spiritual truth; it is equally a scientific truth, and ought to have its application in all scientific relations. Men cannot judge musical, poetical, or artistic productions except as they are musical, poetically, and artistically cultivated. No man has a right to make his own ignorance a ground of authoritative assertion. It has been well said that like Pascal, Edwards, and Vinet, the believer on his knees can see farther than the philosopher on tip-toe. The spiritually minded man in some sense judges all things. The Lord Himself declared that the Father had revealed great spiritual truths to babes, although they were hidden from those who deemed themselves wise and prudent. Sir Isaac Newton said to Dr. Halley, a man of science but an unbeliever in revelation, "I am glad to hear you speak about astronomy or mathematics, for you have studied and you under-

stand them; but you should not talk of Christianity, for you have not studied it." Sir Isaac Newton had a right so to speak, and Dr. Halley doubtless felt the propriety of this criterion of judgment.

Even a man like Rousseau was obliged to confess that the majesty of the Scripture struck him with admiration, and the purity of the gospels deeply moved his heart. He affirms that "It is impossible that a book at once so simple and so sublime should be merely the work of man. . . . What sweetness! What purity! What sublimity in the maxims of the sacred personage whose name it records! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who can so live and so die, without weakness and without ostentation? If the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God."

All who have tasted and who have seen that the Lord is good give their unqualified testimony to the divine seal that is thus upon the pages of this blessed book.

MORAL EVIDENCE.

This kind of evidence is closely related to the experimental evidence of which mention has just been made; but this carries us to a higher point still in our affirmations regarding the holy book. The Bible is written in the style of God's book of nature and providence. False religions are

founded on darkness and superstition; but God is light, and that light shines on every page in His blessed book. There is a moral power in the Scripture which controls men in every social condition and every degree of intellectual culture. Whether this book goes into civilized countries or among barbarous tribes, whether into the palaces of royalty or the cottages of poverty, it manifests its power as from God. In every age it has conquered the native enmity of the human heart; it has purified the most wicked lives, and has made them radiant with heavenly light, and beautiful with Christian love. The history of the Christian Church is a history of the triumphs of the Bible over the sins of men. Countless thousands are in glory to-day who were redeemed by the power of Bible truths learned from its holy pages and energized by the Spirit of God. The truths of this book are the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth. There is no heart so hard that it cannot soften, no life so black that it cannot whiten, and no sinner so lost that it cannot redeem with a great salvation.

It not only depicts men's sins in all their blackness and darkness, but it makes known the remedy for sin in all its beauty and power. It nowhere approves the sins which it often describes. It plainly rebukes the sins of its greatest heroes and its recognized saints. It declares that, "Thy word is very pure; the righteousness of Thy tes-

IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCES OF THE BIBLE. 413

timonies is everlasting; Thy law is the truth." The apostle Paul affirms of the Gospel which this book reveals, that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

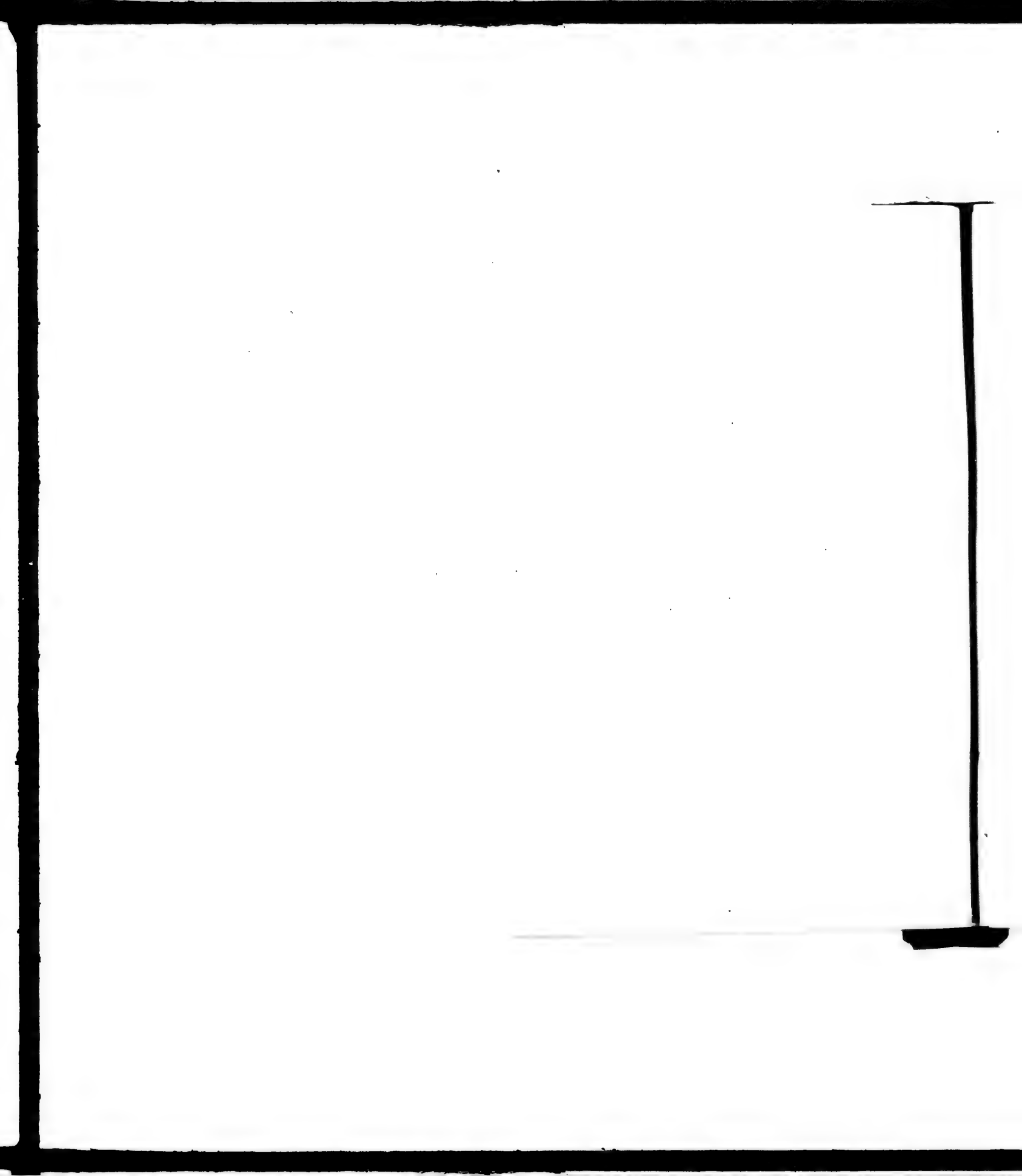
Let us then judge the Bible by its fruits. Are those fruits immoral? What other book has ever placed before the race so excellent a standard? What other book has ever given the race moral power to realize the lofty standard it has erected? Where else in the world can you find character so unselfish, so pure, just, noble, manly, and divine, as that created by the teaching of God's Word? Not from those who obey its truths do our criminals come; not from those who love its precepts do the guilty who are condemned in our courts find their recruits. If all men obeyed its precepts, our prisons and our almshouses alike would soon be nearly or entirely empty. Our magistrates and police officers might be dismissed, and our whole people would be intelligent, industrious, moral, and noble. We may well ask the question which Linquet, the able French writer, once asked of Voltaire, and we may ask it of others who deny the divinity of this holy book: "Will you dare to assert that it is in philosophic families we are to look for models of filial respect, conjugal love, sincerity in friendship, or fidelity among domestics?"

Were you disposed to do so, would not your own conscience, your own experience, suppress the falsehood, even before your lips could utter it?"

Here we take our stand. We defy the world to refute the evidence of the divine origin of this holy book. The strongest thinkers are its students; the noblest men of all the ages indorse its precepts, and reproduce them in their daily lives. It is true to-day as when the apostle Peter wrote the words, "The grass withereth, the flower thereof fadeth away, but the word of the Lord endureth forever."

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THE APPROPRIATE STUDY OF THE
BIBLE.



XXIV.

THE APPROPRIATE STUDY OF THE BIBLE.

WE have now reached the last chapter in our studies on the "Old Book." The following lines—which appear also on the title-page of this volume, and which were found on the fly-leaf of a Bible in one of our great hotels, written by an unknown guest—well express the deepest thought of all true students of the Bible:

"O holy, holy Book of God!
There are no words like thine;
The tones that angels bow to hear
Breathe through these lines divine;
And come, with love's own melody,
From the King's heart to mine."

How shall we best study this "holy Book of God"?

We readily see that it is of very great importance that we should have correct conceptions of the duty and privilege of becoming earnest students of the Bible; and it is also important that we adopt appropriate methods in the study of this book. Unfortunately many persons study it but little; and sometimes its imperfect students seem to consider their ignorance of the book as giving

them special authority to pronounce against its teachings. The ignorance of many of its critics would be laughable were it not culpable. Daniel Webster tells us that when he was in Paris he received an account of a French infidel who accidentally found some stray leaves of an unknown volume. Although in the constant habit of denouncing the Bible, like most infidel writers, he had never carefully read any considerable part of it. The fugitive leaves which this infidel found contained the sublime prayer of Habakkuk, as found in the third chapter of the book bearing his name. This infidel was a man of fine literary taste, and he was captivated by the poetic beauty of the literature he had found. He hastened, as Mr. Webster tells us, to the club-house to announce the discovery to his associates. They with him were charmed by the sublime words they read. They were anxious to know the name of the gifted author. The elated discoverer of these leaves replied, "A writer by the name of Hab-ba-kook,—of course a Frenchman!" The surprise of all, it can readily be imagined, was as great as their chagrin was complete when they were informed that the passage they so enthusiastically admired was not written by one of their own countrymen, but by one of God's ancient prophets, and was contained in the Bible, the book they affected to despise. Mr. Webster adds: "This I regard as one of the sublimest passages of in-

aspired literature, and often have I wondered that some artist equal to the task has not selected the prophecy and the scene described as the subject of a painting."

It is difficult to lay down rules for the proper study of the Word of God; some suggestions, however, may be made in that line.

The Bible should be read *constantly*. Unfortunately many persons read it but seldom. All should be urged to possess a Bible,—one of the best procurable copies of the sacred book. These copies are now prepared with helps of the most valuable kind, giving the result of prolonged and profound study in many useful lines, and the entire book is offered at a remarkably low price. It is cause for gratitude that this book of books, with all the helps suggested, can be procured at so low a figure. All men and women ought to have a Bible of their own. We never can get out of a Bible that is not our own the instruction and inspiration which would be ours were the book our personal property. The Bible not only gives us spiritual food, but intellectual aliment as well. Its daily supply is as needful for the sustenance of the soul as is the daily supply of food for the support of the body. The leanness of many Christians is due, in very considerable part, to the fact that they do not feed upon this food divine. Many seldom read the Bible, even on the Lord's day, although with some it is a Sunday book and nothing

more. They then read but a chapter or two, and the book is laid away until the next Sunday. It should be read daily; it should be our constant counsellor and inspirer. The noblest souls have ever drunk freely from this divine fountain of spiritual life and power. No man is so situated but that he might study the Scriptures were he so disposed. We must urge, with all earnestness and solemnity, the daily reading of this blessed book. Every day we ought to get here our supply of manna, as God's ancient people secured it regularly day by day. We might well, as soon as opportunity permits, set aside a portion of time each day for Bible reading and prayer. Better only glance at the daily newspaper, and carefully study the Bible, than the reverse. It will well repay us to take time for this purpose. There is an old proverb that no traveller is ever detained on his journey by stopping for needed food and rest. Many busy men and women can bear ample testimony to the value of careful study of God's Word amid their hurried domestic duties and pressing business vocations. We ought all to follow the example of John Quincy Adams, to whom reference has already been made.

The Bible ought also to be read *consecutively*. We study it too much after the hop, skip, and jump method. Our perusal of this holy book is scrappy, disconnected, and so often unmeaning. We ought sometimes to study it, reading large

portions at a single sitting. Indeed, whole books might in this way be read and mastered. Were we to read chapters of history in Macaulay, Green, or McMaster as we read the Bible, we would make these chapters largely meaningless; were we to read the plays of Shakespeare or the poems of Tennyson and Longfellow as we read the Bible, we should destroy the continuity of their thought, and rob them alike of practical meaning and poetic beauty. We ought to take such a portion of the Bible as the book of Job, and read it from its first word to its last, mingling meditation and prayer with the reading, before we have risen from the inspiring task. We should then get a deeper interest in all portions of the holy word, and we should get a connected view of part with part. No man can judge a rose by a single petal, nor a tree by a leaf; neither ought we to judge a book of the Bible by one chapter, nor the whole Bible by one book.

The late Adolphe Monod tells us that when in a season of painful affliction he had a young man read to him from the Word of God; and how he was not satisfied with the reading of the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans until the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters had also been read, that he might fully appreciate the drift of the argument; then he needed also the ninth and the following chapters to the end of the epistle; and in order that he might lose nothing he insisted on reading

also the first four chapters of the epistle. Consecutive reading is of the highest possible importance. It is impossible unduly to emphasize the value of this practice. Many read merely in a routine manner, not really reading the Bible, but simply reading a certain number of chapters daily or weekly. There may also be a merely formal reading which has in it somewhat of the superstitious element, as a man gallops through the reading of a prayer before he hurries off to his business. This spasmodic and periodic reading will never enable us to get the heart and soul out of the blessed book, as we should discover both did we read consecutively, meditatively, and prayerfully.

This leads to the statement that the Bible should be read *comprehensively*. Each part sustains, as we have already seen, relations to all other parts. Even the long genealogical tables and lists of names, such as are found in the books of Numbers, Chronicles, and Ezra, have their significance. Some of these tables stand related to the privileges of birthrights, and even to the royal lineage of the Christ. Much will be gained in reading the so-called dry parts, such as the minute ceremonial laws in the book of Leviticus. Although the mind may not retain all these details in their completeness, there will be value in their careful study as we come to meditate on other portions of the holy book. It will be worth much if we

simply memorize one verse each day. If we think for a moment we shall see what a gain it would be did we master three hundred and sixty-five verses in each year of our lives. In a very little time we should become wonderfully conversant with the matchless book. We should be walking commentaries on all parts of the holy Scripture.

Should we study the Bible *topically*? This method of study has been strongly indorsed by Dwight L. Moody, and by other evangelists and expounders of the Bible. It is conceivable that at times at least this method may be profitably pursued. The idea of this method is to take up a subject and follow it through the entire Bible. The word *faith* may be taken up and followed in this method, using the aid of a concordance and a reference Bible. This word fills about two columns in Cruden's Concordance; this fact alone shows what a prominent place it has on the pages of sacred Scripture. Then such a word as *grace* might be taken up and followed through the Bible in a similar manner. Mr. Moody calls attention to the wonderful influence upon his own mind of this method of study in respect to this word *grace*. The word *love* in its height, depth, breadth, and length might also be studied along this same line. And so with the words *repentance*, *righteousness*, and other similarly expressive words. This method might be very greatly enlarged, and *praise*, *command* and *warning* or *example* might be the sub-

ject of careful study. Such commands as "Arise," "Be of good cheer," "Fear not," "Follow Me," and others of a similar character might thus be studied; or the "great" things of the Bible might be studied in a similar way. There is, however, danger in this method of Bible study. Sometimes one word in the original Hebrew or Greek is rendered in our common version by two or three or possibly more words. In selecting, therefore, the one word from our version, we should be misled as to the original word, and so misled as to the mind of the Spirit. There is danger thus that we should make unwise generalizations and unfair qualifications of the original thought of the Spirit of God. But this method wisely pursued, and of course within proper limits, may be made extremely profitable to any judicious student of the sacred Scriptures.

We are also to study the Bible *personally*. This thought is of great practical value. Unfortunately we too often think of Bible truths as spoken so long ago as to have lost their original meaning, and to be spoken to so many as to have no personal application. We gain much when we learn that God's truth is spoken to us as if we were the only persons in the universe. The Bible is indeed a great storehouse of truth for all the world, but it is, so far as we are concerned, a treasury filled with messages addressed to us. It is God's message to each reader, and to each human soul.

Christ died for the whole world because He tasted death for every man. We are to appropriate the great truths of God's book as if they were spoken to us alone. Every plant and flower and shrub and tree can look up to the sun and say, "O sun, thou art all mine!" Each plant, however little, has all the sun to itself, as if there was nothing in the world but this plant. So each soul has all of God's truth, and of God Himself, as if there were no other soul in all the universe. In fact, God's Word talks to each man alone, impressing its solemn warnings, inspiring with its gracious promises, and ennobling with its heavenly blessings.

The Bible also is to be read *lovingly*. We never shall understand its deep meaning except we be in sympathy with its spirit. No child can fully understand the meaning of a father's letter except he knows something of that father's heart, and is in sympathy with that father's thought and wish. We have only to remember how much more meaning the twenty-third psalm, the fourteenth chapter of the gospel of John, or the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah would have, were we in hearty sympathy with the great spiritual truths contained in these precious portions of God's book. Indeed, it is impossible for us to get at the heart meaning except our own heart be in sympathy with that meaning. The text, "The just shall live by faith," gave light and comfort to Luther as he lay sick on

his bed at Bologna, and afterward it unloosed the shackles of Roman superstition from his soul as it came to his mind while he was going on his knees up the so-called staircase of Pilate. It is most interesting to study the effect of certain passages upon many of God's heroes and heroines. "Yet there is room," came to John Bunyan with all the light and life of God, and gave him hope in his time of deepest spiritual depression. "Look unto Me and be ye saved, for I am God and there is none else," was the blessed command and assurance that came to Spurgeon through the lips of the humble Methodist minister who was the means of leading him into the kingdom of God. Only as these passages of Scripture are translated into personal experience do they acquire their power. "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin," was the verse that arrested the thought and comforted the heart of Captain Hedley Vicars, as he carelessly turned over the pages of a Bible when in Canada, in November, 1851, waiting the arrival of a brother-officer. That verse changed his life. He determined at that moment to live as a man ought who was washed in that precious blood; and from that hour until he poured out his life-blood for his country and his queen, he was a loyal servant of his Lord and Master Jesus Christ. The precious promises of God's Word must become tried and proved before their full meaning can really become our own. Henry Ward

Beecher well said that: "To come to the Bible through the commentaries is much like looking through a landscape through garret windows over which unmolested spiders have spun their webs." The Scripture must be found, eaten, masticated, and digested by us before it can really become a part of body, mind, and heart. Robert Boyle said, "I use the Scripture not as an arsenal to be resorted to only for arms and weapons, but as a matchless temple where I delight to contemplate the beauty and symmetry, the magnificence of the structure, and to increase my awe and excite my devotion to the Deity there preached and adored." We must, like the Psalmist, hide God's word in our heart, that we may not sin against Him; this will be putting the best thing—God's Word—in the best place—our heart—for the best purpose—that we may not sin. The Bible should be studied with our heart as well as with our head. We are to grow in love as well as in knowledge. We are to secure spiritual comfort as well as intellectual knowledge from the pages of God's holy book.

We are also to study the Bible *prayerfully*. Only as we look up to God who gave us this book through holy men of old can we rightly understand the words He has written. He studies well who prays well. Prayer stimulates all the intellectual faculties as well as all the spiritual activities. In the book of Revelation, the book of the

vision was closed with seven seals, and only one out of all the earth or in heaven was able to break the seals and read the scroll. That One is He who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Lamb of God. To this hour, and in every human experience, the Master must still break the seal or the deepest meaning of the volume will not be understood. The best scholarship will not enable us to understand the mind of the Spirit except that scholarship be energized and sanctified by prayer for heavenly enlightenment. Scholarship is only a telescope. Even after this telescope is adjusted to the eye, and all parts of physical vision are provided, the beauty of the heavens will not be rightly interpreted except as heavenly wisdom is bestowed. We may be the most learned and zealous students of the Bible; we may bring to it great Biblical lore; we may be able to expatiate with the eloquence of a Paul on its transcendent themes, but it will be to us in its deep spiritual meaning a sealed book except as it is opened to us by the Spirit of God invoked by our earnest prayers. Well may each one of us pray as did Milton, that immortal blind bard of a heroic era, the sublime singer of a glorious epoch:

" Celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight."

We are told that when Archbishop Usher grew old, and the strongest glasses gave but little help to his failing sight, and he was unable to read any book except in the strongest light, he would then sit where the sunshine came upon him in its fullest strength; and when that sunshine flitted to another window he would place himself again under its brilliant rays; and so he moved from place to place, continuing his studies until the sun had set. It is true of us that we can understand the Scriptures only as an answer to our prayer, in harmony with our meditation, and in line with our whole spiritual attitude. God pours the radiance of His Spirit on the sacred page. Then and only then can we get the spiritual meaning of the words which our Father who is a Spirit has communicated to us His children.

The Bible is also to be studied *reverently*. The spirit of prayer just commended will produce the reverence which ought to be inseparable from all study of the great book. Too often it is made the subject of most reprehensible jesting. Many parts of the Bible have been robbed of much of their meaning because they have given point to vulgar jokes and gross conundrums. Such treatment of God's book is unworthy the practice or even the partial indorsement of any truly devout student. It is difficult to speak with patience of those who profess to be devoted believers, and who are guilty of treating the Bible in this fashion. A simi-

lar remark applies to many of our most spiritual hymns. They have been used simply to point jokes and to excite the laughter of unbelievers, or of utterly thoughtless persons though nominal believers. We do not at all advocate any superstitious feeling regarding the Word of God, but we do advocate treating it with the reverence becoming a letter directed to us from our Father in heaven. Many have treated it with a degree of disrespect in this regard which they would not for a moment think of giving to a letter from an absent parent or other earthly friend.

If we study the Bible thus reverently we shall always be studying it spiritually, and thus at the same time we shall be studying it understandingly. Meditation goes with prayerful and reverent study, and thus spiritual things are spiritually discerned by the spiritually minded student of the holy book.

The Bible must also be studied *obediently*. This really is one of the most important elements of its study to which we have thus far adverted. This is the practical point toward which all Bible study should tend; this is the climax of all our examination and effort. Indeed, only as we are obedient to the command of God's Spirit can we understand the meaning of that Spirit. The Lord Himself has clearly taught us that only those who do the will of God can really understand that will. Nothing is more pernicious than the reading of pathetic

books, which profoundly stir our emotions, but which lead us to no action corresponding to the emotions thus deeply stirred. Many kinds of novel-reading thus tend to blunt all true sympathy and to prevent practical sympathetic action. Reading of that character becomes a great injury to our physical and spiritual nature. So the reading and study of God's Word not accompanied by obedience to God's commands will tend to harden our hearts and to ossify and even to petrify our moral natures. All true study should result in obedient service to God and man. The Bible itself expresses profound wisdom when it says: "Be ye doers and not hearers only of the word." And Christ set us a noble example when He affirmed, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." We should practise the Bible fully. We must remember that all Scripture is practical. We are not to pick and choose among God's commandments. Doing the truth is the only way of really believing the truth. We are to see light in God's light. We are to study the Bible on our knees, and then we are to rise and practise the truths we have learned. "Let us then," in the words of Dr. George Dana Boardman, "study the Bible with the sincere and ardent purpose of executing our Father's will as He shall reveal it to us. Then will He station us on the Delectable Mountains of the immortal Dreamer; and ever and anon our ears shall catch clearer and clearer echoes of the angelic music, and

our eyes command a more magnificent sweep of the glories of the celestial Canaan."

"Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of Thy holy word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of immortal life which Thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen."

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